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THE
HIGHLANDERS:

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE HERMIT IN LONDON, HERMIT ABROAD, &c.

"Wherever I wander, wherever I roam,
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart's with my home."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE HIGHLANDERS.

CHAPTER I.

Now am I trebly orphaned : For the grave
Hath closed on her who dying gave me life,
On him who gave, him that had got my heart ;
And I am lonely,—in a wilderness
Of weeping kinsfolks.

OLD PLAY.

ORDINARY grief has many outlets, by which its pressure ebbs away from the heart,—the hysteric scream, the convulsive start, the ejaculated complaints, and the burning tear ; but when sorrow has possessed the whole heart, all those means of relief are held cap-

tive, and every portal of escape is barred up. When the whole prospect looks black and blighted, and when, from the chances of life, and the winds of heaven, there comes not one glimmering scintillation of hope, the mute mourner turns almost to adamant. The blank and speculationless eye either bends, burning and tearless, upon the mother earth, or it is raised toward the habitation of its Father, wild and undecided—too wretched to hope—too pious to despair—all unprepared for holy resignation—holding no kindred and no communion with this nether world. The clasped hands, the motionless limbs, and the fixed, cold and marbly figure make the sufferer appear as if life itself had not departed,

but been petrified in its abode,—and can be compared to nothing but the living semblance of a statue, before a new-made sepulchre.

Such was Flora, as she stood by the bed upon which lay the lifeless body of that kind father, whose lips had just ceased to move, and whose dying words—dying ere the hope of recovery was passed and gone, yet vibrated on her ear.

There is a fondness in the heart of affection which questions the power of death itself, and though we observe and admit the mortality of others, there lingers about us a belief that the fond one shall be spared—shall triumph over the universal shock, and live with us in a golden immortality: and if

immortality here could be predicated of manly strength and matchless virtue, that form which now lay lifeless before its almost equally lifeless daughter, never would have ceased to breathe and to bless with deeds of beneficence all about it. But much as his bewildered daughter questioned the fact, he had fallen—fallen to rise no more.

It was with difficulty that she could be torn from the corpse, and it was long ere the cries and lamentations of the servants, and the clan—who came hurrying to the castle, could awaken her to the consciousness of any other object. She was removed, however, and scorning common sorrow, upon an occasion so peculiarly oppressive, she, without one tear or one murmur of

complaining, not only gave directions about what was to be done, but endeavoured to comfort her household and her kindred.

Among these, it was not easy to decide which was the predominant feeling—sorrow for the untimely death of the great and good Glenmore, or admiration of their young mistress, who, in the very depth of affliction, had shown a spirit worthy of her race. Perhaps, indeed, though they could never forget the former, they gave the palm to the latter; and it was exquisitely touching to hear the encomiums and benedictions which, in their own poetic and impassioned language, they bestowed upon her.

“The Lord, who has taken the no-

ble tree to himself, will nourish, and water, and watch over the lovely branch," said old Rory, as tears of mingled grief and admiration filled his eyes, and flowed in burning torrents down his time-worn face.

There was abundance of grief, abundance of mourners, and no want of heart or of hand, to perform the holy rites of sepulture in a manner becoming the chief of the Clan-More ; but there was one want—the day which saw Flora parentless, saw her also pennyless ; and though the last honours of Glenmore were not to be measured by large sums given to a hireling and heartless undertaker, yet some pecuniary supply was necessary. If hecatombs of slain beasts could have

suffered, every ox, every cow, and every sheep, would at once have bled in honour of the chief's funeral; but of them a small stock sufficed; and though much money was not wanted, yet there was not among the clan enough for the scanty purpose. A supply came, however: for one morning, a horseman delivered a parcel for Flora, and just pausing to break bread and touch the cup at the gate, according to custom, he rode off without saying whence he came. The parcel, upon being opened, was found to contain three hundred pounds, but it contained no clue to the giver, and sought no security and no return.

This sum came most opportunely, and it more than sufficed for the exi-

gencies of the time ; but there darted across the mind of Flora, a doubt as to the propriety of using that which had been so conveyed. A consultation was accordingly held ; and the whole clan were questioned as to their knowledge of the matter ; but they one and all pleaded ignorance. Flora's first conjecture was, that the money might have come from Lord Gerald, and she felt half inclined to send Isabella a letter of thanks ; but the clan, and Castlecreaghy in particular, rose in absolute rebellion at the idea, upon the ground that Isabella had insulted their race ; that it became not the lady of Glenmore, (for that was now Flora's lofty though lonely title,) to make advances to the wife of any Sassenach,

whose honours were merely upon a bit of paper, the more especially when they did not know whether she was "an honest woman," or not.

Castlecreaghy found out fifty other sources more likely than Lord Gerald to supply Flora's wants. There was, in the first place, the West Indian, who had been at one time so much obliged to Glenmore, to whom such a sum would be nothing, and who was now near the spot, as he had purchased "all and hail the Barony and Lands of Balstarvum," upon which he was said to be spending double this sum every week. Besides him, there were many others who were under obligations to Glenmore; and why not sup-

pose that “ane o’ their ain” had done this act of kindness, rather than “*the Sassenach limmer*, that shot the bonny black horse for nae offence at a’ but only being sick, which neither man nor beast could either help or heal o’ their ain strength.”

Thus admonished of her kinsman, and now her chief adviser, Flora resolved to accept the bounty of the unknown friend, leaving the discovery and return of the kindness to the chances of future development; and thus admonished, and resolving, she made more exertions than could have been expected, for performing, in a becoming manner, the last rites to her honoured father; for the clan insisted that the last of the

Glenmores should not be borne to his last abode without due and merited circumstance.

There is something exquisitely touching in a Highland funeral; and in that of Glenmore, there was something more touching than usual. The whole clan marched for the ceremony—not in common mourning, but in their full tartan costume,—the gentlemen having crape scarfs on their arms, and the pipers, of whom more than twenty mustered upon the occasion, having long streamers of the same sepulchral substance hung to their sounding instruments. All were on foot; for it would have been an indelible stain to the Clanmore, had not each of them, down to the very lowest serf,

borne a part in the conveyance of their chief to his final resting-place, in the little ruined chapel of St. Chuillan, where there were gathered together the honours of more chiefs of the clan than would have filled the chapel, if alive ; the rent banner and the broken tree were displayed ; the pipers were already sounding the gathering, the henchman and gamekeeper stood with lighted matches ready to fire the farewell shots ; the women had assembled to weep ; and the clansmen, drawn up in two double lines, extended from the door of the apartments to a long way beyond the bridge. The parting cup was swallowed round, which they swallowed in silence, and stood motionless to hear the parting gun. That

was fired, and immediately the wild and wailing notes of the "Lament" filled the air. As the sable bier approached, borne at first by the head men of the clan, the others pulled off their bonnets, bowed and fell into the rear, and the whole were soon in the order of march, followed by the lamentation of the females.

When heard near at hand, and upon ordinary occasions, fastidious ears find or fancy something harsh in the notes of the bagpipe; but in the lonely solitude of the mountains, accompanying a funeral procession and breathing a lament, and harmonized to all the wild echoes of rock and mountain, there is a solemn and thrilling power about them which the ear would be fas-

tidious indeed if it did not admire. To this music the funeral procession of Glenmore twined on through glens emptied of their inhabitants, and over muirs, where nothing save the roe and the heathcock could be started at its sound. They arrived at the lonely chapel, performed the rites of sorrow, said their orisons, and returned to the place where the customary feast was provided, and where Flora, though often toasted and oftener blessed, was excused from making her appearance.

Up to the time of the removal of her father's remains from the Castle, the sorrow of his daughter had put on the stony aspect of incurable sickness at heart, or the sturdy resignation of a daughter of the Clan-more ; but, when

the sable bier was lifted up at the porch—when the characteristic lament rang through the court, and was answered by the groans of the serfs and the wailings of the clanswomen, she was fairly overcome. She ran to her own apartment—threw herself upon her couch—buried her face in the clothes, and burst out in a flood of tears and a paroxysm of lamentation. She reflected on the desolation which must now come upon her beloved clan—upon the delapidation to which the halls of her fathers must now be subjected—and that herself must now go forth into the world a helpless wanderer. “I have now no friend, no comforter, no support ; no, not even one to whom I may tell my grief,—I am alone—the last of

my race—in the presence of that heaven that has thus laid upon me the hand of its chastisement. I would be resigned—I would be the daughter of Glenmore—I would be the shield of my people; but, alas! the heart of a woman is weak and her hand is feeble; and what can I do, bereft, as I am, of every bosom to share my grief—of every hand that can wipe my burning eyes?”

At that moment a hand came softly over her cheek, and a flood of tears poured at her side. “You are not alone, my dear lady,” said a simple but soothing voice; “are not all your kindred about you, and am not I your poor Mary, to whom you have been so kind, able to work for you all day, and watch for you all night? O, be

comforted—the stroke is from heaven, as you taught me to say, when my last parent was on her bier; and as you taught me then, so do you now turn to Him, and seek comfort in Him, who alone can heal the wounded heart.”

There is a power in sympathy, if kindly and sincerely, however humbly offered, that can snatch the soul from the very swellings of the Jordan of agony, and place it, though cold, pale, and trembling, upon the dry land of Hope: the blood which had, but a moment before, been burning over the whole face and neck of Flora, hurried inward; and strengthened the heart—she started up, and in an instant her knees were clasped by Mary

Mac Bain, the grandchild of old Rory, who, bereft of her parents at the very dawning of reason, had been brought within the castle, and received from Flora an education not common among the Clan.

“Kneel not to me, Mary,” said the recovering Flora; “let us kneel to our God. You have spoken well; you shall be my companion, and He shall be our comforter.”

Their prayers were brief but fervent, and when they rose from their kneeling posture, something resembling a smile came across the features of Lady Glenmore, as if the expression of grief, though in secret, had been unbecoming that house, of which she was the last remnant.

“That is my own dear lady,” said Mary; “we shall not be miserable. Have not I hands to work? have not you taught me? and am I not rich?” pulling from her pocket the guinea which formed her share of Lord Gerald’s present—putting it into the hands of her mistress, and stepping backwards a pace or two, and casting an enquiring eye, as much as to say, “Have I been too forward?”

“No, my honest-hearted child,” said Flora; “but keep that in the mean-time; I do not want money;” and with that, she displayed a handful of the gold which had been sent by the unknown benefactor.

“And perhaps you do not want Mary either?” said the girl, dashing

the guinea upon the ground, throwing herself at Flora's feet, and bursting into tears.

It was now Flora's turn to act the comforter. She assured the girl, that part with whom she might, Mary should never leave her. At this the fit of sorrow gave place to a fit of joy, as tumultuous and perhaps as painful ; but that was soon over, and Mary strove, by every little kind office, to alleviate the grief of her mistress.

Flora's grief was, however, too deeply rooted for being removed by all the kind-hearted attentions which Mary could bestow ; and her internal suffering was soon diverted,—it could not be augmented,—by annoyances from without. Finding that Mac Skinner, sen. had

been so successful in recovering the amount of the former wadset from Glenmore, several of the most vindictive of his creditors thought the letting loose of that personage upon his daughter, in the spring-tide of her sorrow, might be the means of squeezing all that was squeezable out of the estate. It may easily be conceived, that this scheme was very eagerly relished by the wily doer; and, in order to render the measures he might pursue more efficient, he prevailed upon all the creditors of the chief, of whom he could obtain knowledge, to assign their bonds, bills, and obligations against the chief; in order that he, the holder, might sue for the joint behoof. The precarious

condition of the Glenmore estate, and the inroads of wadsets and annual rents, induced the creditors to execute a most absolute assignation in favour of old Mac Skinner; and no sooner was he armed with this deed, than he commenced operations.

The ultimate object of Mac Skinner, in taking this trouble, for the behoof of Glenmore's creditors, (for that was his ostensible object,) was one of very deep and crafty purpose: It was this: to possess himself, or rather his hopeful heir, the partner of Mac Fleecer, of the estate and honours of Glenmore; to procure for the said heir the hand of Flora, which was, indeed, a *sine qua non* in the business; and then turning round upon the creditors, to whom he

had taken care to give no back bond, to set them and their claims at defiance ; and thus raise his family to the first rank in the Highlands, without any other price than a reasonable portion of legal villainy.

The son was written to, and entered warmly and at once into the scheme, declaring that he would marry the devil, if the lands of Glenmore were the dowry : and immediately the two set to work. They collected all the bonds and obligations, calculated compound interest upon them, and added law expenses, not forgetting the expense of the former visit, till the amount would have staggered belief ; and having thus framed abundant pretext, they took their measures for obtaining possession.

The preliminary steps were to be two : first, a general point of all the moveable goods and gear left by the late chief ; and, secondly an *adjudication* of the lands, which would entitle them to immediate possession of the rents, and by intimidating the friendless Flora, force her, if she could not be gained by fair means, to put them in possession of the lands themselves.

But how to begin, was the difficulty ; for it was clear, that though the opposition of the clansmen might be got the better of, and the goods and chattels might be sold at the point of the bayonet, yet that this might frustrate the ultimate and more favourite part of the scheme ; and therefore it was resolved to proceed warily.

Old Mac Skinner having prepared the way, by procuring a number of angry letters to be written by others, wrote one himself, couched in terms of superlative kindness,—stating the honourable manner in which the good Glenmore had acted towards him ; the pain he felt at the situation of his amiable and excellent daughter, and his readiness to visit the Castle, put her affairs in train, and get her through her difficulties, without charging a single farthing. This letter to Flora was accompanied by others to Castlecreaghy, and the head men of the clan, couched in the same terms ; and so complete was their effect, that at a general council, it was agreed instantly

to invite the *friendly* doer, which was no sooner thought of than done.

Mac Skinner had no sooner got this invitation, than he prepared for the journey ; he, however, sent a party in advance, whose conduct, as contrasted with his, tended to lull all suspicion, and induced the clan to look upon him as their best, and indeed their only friend. Early one morning, two “ most intimate friends,” who had been reconnoitering during the night, made their entrance into the Castle, and, supported by a party of soldiers, proceeded to the business of poinding, in defiance of all the clansmen who could muster. The alarm which this produced can be well conceived, and so can the joy which

followed it, when Mac Skinner made his appearance, rated the men soundly, and ultimately turned them out of the Castle, though not till they had completed their business. Having done this friendly act, no confidence was too great for him, and the clansmen readily consented to the serving of the adjudication, which he represented as the only means of preserving for Flora the inheritance of her fathers. His advice was, that she should retire to Edinburgh till matters were arranged, and he went so far, as to recommend her to a friend of his own, who would receive and take care of herself, Mary, and Allan Glass.

The departure was immediate ; and though Flora could not help sighing

as she took the last sight of her ancient Castle, yet she hurried on in the hope of returning when the friendly offices of Mac Skinner should be completed.

When she and her servants landed in the Scottish metropolis, they were met by Mac Skinner, jun., who conveyed them to the house of his father's friend, situated in Hanover-street. The house was a splendid one ; and the lady, to whom Flora was introduced, though big and bloated in her appearance, yet expressed great, though vulgar kindness. She hinted to Flora, that as the servants of the house knew better how to treat a lady than those Highland boors, they had better be removed to a place which she recommended. Flora, however, would not consent to this, but

insisted that Mary should remain in the apartment with her, while she sent out Allan Glass to make some little purchases.

Young Mac Skinner, having ordered refreshments, in a manner at which Flora was a little startled, the more especially as the lady of the house did not stay to partake of them, took his leave; but Mary, who looked after him, with a Highland imprecation upon his ugly face, overheard him say, "Mother Damask, take care of the Highland doe; she is my preserve." It was well for Flora that she did not immediately understand this; but the explanation was not long in coming, for Allan Glass, having met, at the turning of the street, six brawny chair-

men of the Clan-more, got from them the character of the house in return for his giving them its number ; and this was no sooner done, than his dirk was out, and he, marching at their head, delivered his fair mistress out of the den of iniquity, ere she had even a suspicion of that being its character. The chairs were instantly in readiness ; Flora and her attendant entered two of them, and the whole set out for a hotel in Princes-street, kept by a clansman of her mother's.

In this they stayed comfortably for a few days ; but as this *entrée* had sickened Flora of Edinburgh, she resolved to quit it, taking Mary with her, and dispatching Allan Glass to tell the clan of the perfidy of Mac Skinner ; the

snare which had been laid for her ; her escape from it ; and her ultimate resolution of seeking an asylum with a friend in the British metropolis, until circumstances should so come about, as that she could take vengeance upon those, who, under the mask of pretended friendship, had been plotting so much villainy.

CHAP. II.

“ Farewell to the Highlands, adieu to the north,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I roam,
My heart’s in the Highlands, my heart’s with my
home.”

So sang, or rather so sighed, the heiress of Glenmore, as, gliding down the Frith of Forth, the last mountain of Scotland faded away upon the north-western horizon. The voyage was tempestuous, and sea-sickness deprived Flora of the attentions of her little maid. But Flora was now upon the waters—upon the world—alone; and the heart of a

Glenmore disdained complaint, although it beat in a female bosom as tender as ever sympathised with the sufferings of mankind. The passage, though boisterous, was brief; and Flora, whose affections now found in Mary an apology for that which they had lost, could not help being amused at the innocent girl's exclamations at the number of ships, the interminable length and depth of the streets, and above all, at her repeatedly saying, "Good gracious! if the very weans here dinna speak as gude English as my lady hersel'."

A short time brought them to the mansion of Flora's relative—a merchant of class number A, who, leaving the Highlands in his youth, had amassed a

large fortune by the most honourable means possible. Even at the threshold of his door, however, Mary could not help whispering to her mistress, “ Gin this should be a house like yon, after a’ ; what will we do for Allan Glass in his dirk ? our clansmen wi’ their muckle sticks, and the two chairs, and the hotel o’ Princes Street ? ” The appearance of the master of the house, however, dispelled at once the fears of the maid and the anxieties of the mistress.

His wife received the fair Caledonian with great kindness, and treated her with great respect ; while the servants of the family were equally lavish of their attentions upon Mary. The splendour of the establishment, and the

sumptuousness of the fare, startled even Flora, accustomed, as she had been, to the sobriety of the Highlands ; and they threw Mary into perfect ecstasies, —she declaring to her mistress, the first time they met alone, that the master of the house “ must be King George’s ain cousin, else he could never support so much extravagance.”

To the children of the mountains, indeed, there might have seemed a degree of coldness and dryness in the manners of the merchant, ill accordant with that mingling of the heart of hospitality to which they are accustomed in their own country ; but habit alone was the cause ; for his heart was naturally benevolent and sincere, although, of necessity, a little touched by the icy

chillness of prudence and money-making; for as freedom and enlargement of mind expand the soul, give wings to the fancy, and bestow an ease and familiarity grouped with politeness, so do the trammels of trade and the function of the earning of money, fetter the behaviour, either with distant manners, or a subserviency to self-interest. But, from the court to the counting-house, and from the field of the warrior to that of the husbandman, men must be taken just as they are found; perfection no where exists; and this merchant, notwithstanding all his stiffness, was an honest man, and perhaps more desirous and more capable of affording protection and doing substantial service to his lovely though

remote kinswoman, than those of loftier name and more sounding pretensions.

After Flora found herself completely at home, in his plain but substantial family, she mentioned to him the good fortune of her cousin Isabella, who was more nearly related to him than herself. At the mention of her marriage to Lord Gerald de Brook, the merchant shook his head, saying, "I had much rather heard of her marriage to the porter in my warehouse; for then the promise made to her would have always netted what it bore in effect; but the honour of Lord Gerald is at as great a discount as the bonds of the most tottering government in the world. You must not see after them in the mean

time, but I will make the requisite inquiries, and advise."

Nor was he tardy in the fulfilment of this promise ; for that very same evening he called Flora apart from the females of his own family, and, with that caution which became his profession, he informed her that Lord Gerald had never been at the St. James's Hotel,—that all he had been able to ascertain was, that his lordship, accompanied by a young lady, who answered to the description of Isabella, had been two days at an hotel in the Adelphi,—that they had observed the strictest incognito while there,—that he had discharged or changed all his servants,—had removed the lady to private lodgings somewhere in the environs of London,

and was actually upon his way to Italy, —at least, it had been ascertained that letters of credit on Florence, Rome, Naples, and many parts of Switzerland and Germany had been furnished to him by his banker. The merchant further added, that in the course of his enquiries, it had come out that Lord Gerald had been in the habit of corresponding regularly with a French mistress in town, while he was in the Highlands,—that he had a deserted daughter at a boarding-school,—that the instances of his perfidy and seduction were almost without number, (including the story of the broken-hearted lady, which, though disguised by him, had been recorded in a public print, and stood uncontradicted,—

namely, that after dishonouring the unfortunate woman, and casting her down from an elevated rank in society, her sufferings and remorse were such, that in a fit of despair, she put a period to her existence by poison)—and that they formed in gay society the theme of conversation with all, and the model for imitation with too many. What had been, or what might be, the fate of the ruined Isabella, he could not discover, and, indeed, it was a pain to enquire and a terror to know; so that he, in the meantime, exhorted Flora to patience and thankfulness, that she herself had escaped the snare, and promised to communicate to her the result of his enquiries, as it should unfold itself.

In this homely, yet splendid and sub-

stantial family, Flora found safety and tranquillity ; but her bosom was not at peace. She felt that she was without a home, the chain of dependence hung heavy upon her ; time brought no cure for her woes ; for even the prospect of the future seemed more clouded than the reality of the present. It is true, that wherever she went, the gracefulness of her figure, the touching interest of her face, heightened as it was by a tone of melancholy, gained her the admiration of all ; but she had no relish for praise, and the attentions of the other sex were irksome and unwelcome,—although good breeding and genteel manners forbade her to testify displeasure, or exhibit any of those repulsive demonstrations which

sit so very ill upon a female brow, when we naturally look for soft sensibility and gentle courtesy. She would not consent to visit any public place ; but passed great part of her time in her own chamber, in the improvement of her mind. Hence she knew not more of the great metropolis than if she had been immured within the cloisters of a nunnery.

The lapse of a few weeks fully revealed to her the deceitful character of Mac Skinner, who had, with the requisite strength of impudence and of men, passed to the castle of Glenmore—sold off the goods and chattels by auction, and, in virtue of the decree of adjudication, uplifted the arrears of rent, distraining the property to the

last sheep, and the last blanket of such as were unable to pay. The number of those was, however, not very great, and the Clan, among themselves, had contrived to purchase all the *favourite* articles belonging to the Chief, and indeed all the furniture of the Castle. Nay, they had gone so far as to take a lease of the Castle itself; and the old servants and furniture were still within it, although the former, now of course without wages, were obliged to support themselves by their own labour. This, however, they did cheerfully, and not only so, but they continued to send Flora a little supply of money, together with a large supply of every thing that was better than another in the rude produce of the district. Among

the latter were a variety of preserves and jellies of mountain berries, of which, though the ladies both of Crutched-Friars and Balaam Hill, the town and country residences of the merchant, doubted the cleanness, yet, upon tasting them, they were, in their own peculiar and eccentric language, constrained to pronounce them “very beautiful,”—which two words Flora did not exactly understand, not being aware of the liberties which they take with Mr. V, and Mr. W, and never having before heard the palate referred to as a judge of beauty.

She continued for some time in this state, receiving the kindnesses of her entertainer and the courtesies, congratulations and presents of her clan ; and

her little waiting maid, who showed a wonderful aptness of disposition, became a favourite in the family. In short, her situation was so comfortable, that could she have forgotten the land of her kindred, the grave of her father, or, what was perchance the most bitter of all—the death of Strathantin, she might have abjured the superiority of the Clan-more, and the pomp of the ancient castle, for the plebeian comfort of some intelligent merchant's country house. Her destiny was different; however, and as her varied cup was not yet nearly filled, chance and circumstance continued to mingle its conflicting ingredients.

In a letter which she received from Castlecreaghy, it was mentioned, that

an anonymous communication had been sent to him, requesting him to forward, to a fictitious address, the exact date of Glenmore's demise; and wishing him, at the same time, to intimate to the Lady Flora, that she need expect no more remittances from the unknown quarter. At the same time, however, it mentioned, that if she chose to part with the portrait of Prince Charles Edward, and also with the full-length of her father, the sum of one hundred pounds would be advanced for them, by leaving an order for their delivery to the bearer, addressed to A. B. at a certain banking-house in Lombard Street.

To this banking-house Flora went, escorted by her friend, the merchant,

but all her efforts to obtain the real name of the writer were in vain. The banker, upon being urged, said he could not be guilty of a breach of confidence towards a person who kept large sums of money in his hands, and who, though extensive in his charities, was always unostentatious, and avoided the disclosure of his name."

"Charities!" exclaimed the child of nature; "charities to Glenmore!" and with this she nearly sunk in the arms of her protector, as he handed her back to his carriage.

They retired to the merchant's house, in order to write a note, stating that no price could purchase the portraits alluded to, and that the would-be pur-

chaser ought better to have known and respected the feelings of a chieftain's daughter, than either to have bargained for what she considered above all price, or to have announced the withdrawing of a relief, neither solicited nor expected. This billet being written, they returned with it to the banker, in order that he might read it in their presence; and for this purpose it was delivered to him, addressed as directed, but not sealed or even folded.

Old "Ten per Cent. and a Bonus," for such was his name upon 'Change, read it over, shook his head, and said to the merchant: "Your young lady seems more proud than prudent; she

sets more value upon a canvass picture of a dead pretender, than upon a hundred golden images of a living king."

"No, sir," said the merchant, "she is only very feeling; nor is that honourable pride for herself, but for the memory of an unfortunate prince, to whom her clan had sworn allegiance, and for the memory of a father, of as high blood and exalted merit as ever graced the human form."

"All very well to speak about; but they won't discount," replied the banker; and turning to a clerk, who had just come in, "Pray how are Consols to day?"

"They have touched 75," replied the clerk; and the conversation continued about Exchequer Bills, and Navy

Bonds, and Foreign Scrip and Omnium—all of which were perfect Hebrew to Glenmore's daughter, of whom, and her fond attachment to the portraits of the prince and her father, he took no more heed ; and indeed he went to his bills and his ledger without so much as bidding her good morning.

Her friend, seeing the effect which the indifference of a disciple of Mammon had produced upon her feelings, had not power to exchange a word with her as they drove home. When they arrived, she retired to her apartments, called her little maid, the only one who could enter fully with her into the sympathies of the Highlands ; and having had all her sufferings lacerated afresh by this rencontre,

which the buying and selling world will think trivial, she was taken ill and confined to her chamber for a week. Nor would the faithful Mary consent to leave it, but waited on her with fond attention while awake, and watched her pillow with solicitude during hours of feverish and disturbed sleep.

CHAP. III.

“ Court not the great ; for oft the coronet
Sits on disordered brows, the downy vesture
Laces a heart, where passions, ill at ease,
And alien both to virtue and to honour,
Revel and rankle.”

EVERY attention which good-nature could suggest, and every comfort which abundance could supply, were bestowed upon Flora during her indisposition ; and when she had so far recovered as to render that advisable, she was driven every morning to an airing in one or other of the Royal Parks. Alighting upon one of these occasions to take a short promenade, she was recognized by a convent-companion,

whom she had not seen since they were at their education together on the continent ; and who, highly connected by marriage, was now moving in the very top circle of fashion. The joy of such a meeting may be easily conceived : it was genuine on the part of her Ladyship ; but it was still more warm and unqualified on that of the daughter of Glenmore, for she had not learned to wear that veil of the heart, which is not only tolerated, but demanded by even the best in the upper walks of life.

“ My dear Emily,” said she, “ what happy associations present themselves to my fancy ? What retrospective pleasure do I feel on beholding the companion of my early youth ? But, Emily,

you have been distant of late. You have been unkind ; you are three letters in my debt ; and I had begun to fear that you *too* (she tried to recal the word) had forgotten me. I never wished to offend you ; what, then, made you abandon me thus ?”

“ Why, my love,” replied Lady Fitz Arthur, I plead guilty, acknowledge my fault, and throw myself upon the mercy of your lovely features, which already smile forgiveness upon me ; but really these husbands are such strange beings, that they will scarcely allow their better halves (as you and I may well consider ourselves) to correspond with any one.” Besides, my dear girl, I have become such a dissipated creature—so shockingly dissipated,

that I never have a single moment to myself. The drudgery of being fashionable is really too much for me ; yet I must just act like my neighbours : and what with my Lord's attendance at the Upper House—the incurables as somebody calls them—and making us dine by night ; and fluttering from route to route, and taking to-night's supper by to-morrow's sun, if the curtains did not keep off his unwelcome peeping ; and the bore of hearing the noon-bell awaken us from our first sleep,—with all this I cannot collect two ideas and put them together. Nay, upon my life, I am sometimes obliged to think and act by proxy, just as I am always obliged to pay by deputy, and by substitute, (here she

laughed very heartily.) A peers' wife, you know, has a right to vote by proxy—but, my dear Flora, I understand that you, too, were setting your cap at a Coronet.”—

At these words the rose faded from the cheek of Flora, and the vermeil retired from her lip. Her Ladyship perceived it, and instantly changed her ground.

“ Pardon me, my old, and dear companion, I have touched a wrong string—one that vibrates melancholy; but you know what a rattle I am, so don't, I entreat you, answer my question.”

Flora had but breath remaining to repeat in a stifled whisper, “ He is no more !”

Lady Fitz Arthur soon caught the

infection ; but, with her, it was soon caught, soon conquered : “ cheer up, Flora. But tell me where are you ? with whom ? and what about ? Then follows the command ; you must find a day for coming, bag and baggage, band-box, *carton*, *sac de nuit*, waiting maid, lap-dog, parrot, Highland poney ; in a word, all, and sundry, your incumbrances, which shall find ample room and hearty welcome at Portland Place.”

“ My baggage is neither so heavy nor so noisy as your enumeration,” said Flora, recovering a little ; “ you will have only myself and a single attendant—little Mary, a Highland exotic, who would not leave me while I was alone, and whom it would ill become

me to leave here, where she would be alone herself. But I shall accept your kind offer, and be early with you next week,—well aware of the affectionate heart which dictates your invitation. But, my dear Emmy, I am ill-formed for running the round of pleasure of which you speak ; and when you turn day into night and night into day, you will have the goodness to consider me as a mere piece of domestic lumber, and leave me as a fixture in my own apartment or in your library.”

“My dear friend,” replied the gay and giddy, yet kind-hearted Lady Fitz Arthur, “thou shalt be an hermit in the conservatory if thou wilt, and live upon the fruits of the garden and the limpid stream ; if thou likest it better,

thou shalt be a statue in the book-room—a very ornamental one ; or, thou shalt be shut up in the music saloon with thy harp—an emblem of the melancholy and moping muse : in short, thou shalt do whatever thou wilt, provided thou comest to my roof. So good bye, Flora,—good bye, the envy and delight of the convent ; good bye, the rose of the Highland heather. You see new fortunes have not made me forget old times,—but I must to business ; I have a dozen of shops to call at ; a score of duns to appease ; three dresses to select ; a jeweller's levee to attend ; besides half a dozen fibs to tell about the breaking of my necklace, the disappointing of Lady Latitude at her citified party, and the amount

of my lace-merchant's and plumasier's bills, which have come before my dear lord—much patience to him—in a very questionable shape: so good bye, and God bless you all the world over." Thus saying, they embraced and parted—a singular contrast, and yet mutually fond of each other.

To feel that she had some one attached to her in a strange country, revived, in some measure, the drooping spirits of Flora, and she made the necessary preparations for bidding adieu, for a time at least, to Crutched Friars and Balaam Hill. But she could not bid them adieu without emotion; for her immaculate bosom was as pure as the untrodden snow upon her own Highland cliff and promontory, yet

without a single trace of its coldness. At parting, her spirits were sunk and her words were feeble; and the merchant himself, although a pillar of frigid integrity, was a little shaken, as, lightly pressing her hand, he bowed her to the carriage,—it may be that he felt a degree of sympathetic electricity proceed from its rosy palm, and that a touch of the mountain hand had conveyed to him a touch of the mountain heart.

To pass suddenly from grave to gay—to mount instantly from sober thought to the pinnacle of airy imagination, is at all times a little difficult; and it cost Flora a heart-racking effort to dissemble the regret she felt at

leaving her plain honest friends, and to smooth her features into the quietude of contentment, far more to irradiate them by a smile, long unknown to her, which should seem an indication of unmingled joy. She tried, however, to do this violence to her feelings, but want of success produced an effect directly opposite.

“Flora, my more than sister, what has happened to thee?” said Lady Fitz Arthur.

Flora told her the truth honestly, and, convinced her that although her heart bounded, to find herself once more in the same walls with her bosom friend Emily, the feeling of gratitude to the kind people whom she had left, unable

to evince its force by a return of kindness, had oppressed and fairly overcome her.

“Nonsense, my dear child ; thou art too perfect,” said Lady Fitz Arthur, (not using the thee and thou of the Quakers, for there was little of the Quaker in her composition, but the *tu et toi* of the convent) “who would not be good to thee, who art all good in thyself, and good to all ? Take a glass of wine, and prepare yourself to see my handsome, roguish, dashing, black-whiskered fellow of a Lord, one of the best natured creatures in the world, and really a generous and a noble soul.”

“I would rather see nobody to-day, but my dear Emmy, if she pleases,” re-

plied Flora ; “ let me be for this evening alone, that I may get over my weakness, and I may be a decent rational creature by to-morrow.” Here fatigue and feebleness, and it may be a deeper feeling, overcame her ; a hectic flushed her cheek, and tears suffused her eyes.

“ Bless thee, dear heart,” said Lady Fitz Arthur, and she kissed her cheek ; “ to be sure ; command here. Nobody shall gainsay ; and if any dare to trespass on thy solitude, I’ll—I’ll—I’ll box their ears.” She had no intention of putting this threat in execution ; but she had made an attempt at the pathetic, and finding herself unequal to it, she had, as most people do, in such a situation, escaped from it the best way she could—that is to say,

awkwardly. Nature had indeed formed her for the softer sympathies, and these were for a moment with Flora; but high spirits, full prosperity, lofty courage, youth unbent by misfortunes, and her ostensible rank in the world, had left her no scope for the exercise of them, but had, on the other hand, plunged her into the most expensive and heedless extravagance. Yet she could feel for one cast in gentler mould, or formed of materials unpliant to the fashioning of folly, however invitingly high her station, or regally dazzling her court. She accordingly commanded rest and tranquillity for the fair stranger, and reserved for the morrow the exquisite delight of presenting to her husband and her friends, one whom

she had looked up to in the age of sincerity, as the paragon of perfection ; who had gained all hearts by claiming indulgence for others, and being a rigid judge of herself ; who was now in the very bloom of beauty, and equally calculated to dazzle and to delight wherever she came. There was perhaps a little selfishness in this, but it was at least an amiable, or a justifiable selfishness : Lady Fitz Arthur, though much too young for assuming the character or the office of a matron, would thus have the pleasure of adding to the galaxy of fashion, what she fondly deemed would be the brightest new star for the season. The effect which her introduction would produce, would also be the greater, in that no harbinger

had proclaimed her coming,—no, not so much as a single newspaper—those astrologers and soothsayers of the gay world,—had predicted her appearance. Under such circumstances, it was not to be wondered at that the Lady Emily gave one day's rest and respite to her Flora, to recruit spirits and re-compose charms, from the display of which, she herself anticipated so much pleasure, and for the bringing forward of which she expected to draw so many praises from the men, and, which is perhaps as gratifying in the upper circles, so much envy and mortification from the women. The two friends conversed together till the labours of the *day* sent Lady Emily to her toilet, and the repose

of the night invited Florato her pillow ;
and we shall leave the one to revel, and
the other to rest, while we are prepar-
ing for a new chapter.

CHAP. IV.

“What would'st thou at the court, fond country fool?
Thou leav'st thy bed at morn, thou sleep'st at night ;
But there they chop and change it. New born day,
Puts on his night-cap, lays him on his pillow,
And Night, that used to dream in her own chamber,
Now revels o'er the city.”

OLD PLAY.

ABOUT one p. m. on the following morning, the Countess entered her friend's room, with “*Bon jour*—how hast thou rested? and have they kept the house quiet? I am a little fearful on that head, as my good and domestic Lord returned from White's, (the club

you must know) at the fifth hour of this precious morning. I do most potently wish, that this club, and *sçavoir vivre*, and the United-service club, and the *Je ne sçai quoi*, were at the deuce, or that the club of Hercules were applied to one and all of them; for they make my poor dear lord look so shockingly ill; and then, under the rose, he is a little bit cross or so, when he loses his money.—But how dost, my dear child? Has breakfast been served, and have my people done their duty to my Flora, and her outlandish caricature of a Highland waiting maid? who, I understand has repaid the Babylonian tongues of our French, and Swiss, and Italians, by the yet more Babylonian dialect of your wilderness of the north.”

Flora expressed not only satisfaction but thankfulness. Her sleep had been refreshing and unbroken, and though still in her morning dress, she had breakfasted and tumbled over all the books in the room.

The two friends again delighted to be together *tete a tete*, acted anew in remembrance the scenes of their youth, their convent walks and amusements, the Lady Abbess's *jobations*, with many trivialities dear to youthful recollection. During their long conversation, the thunders of knocking, which were ever and anon discharged at the door, startled, agitated and alarmed the Highland beauty; but Lady Fitz Arthur begged her never to mind it, adding, "not one of these

many visitors will gain admission, and indeed very few of them can either ask for it or be offended at a refusal; for most of them, if not men and women of straw, are ladies and gentlemen of card or paper. You must know, that we great folks send an empty coach when we visit, and keep the house religiously when we are not at home; but you shall be initiated into all the mysteries bye and bye."

At three o'clock her Ladyship's *vis-a-vis* was announced; and at five it was ordered to drive round to the stables, as not being wanted. Her own footman (she had a separate establishment of horses, carriages and servants) was instructed to take out a number of rout-invitation cards, and more than

another hour elapsed before Lady Fitz Arthur could tear herself from her companion.

On glancing toward the chimney clock, which had been taking more careful note of time than themselves, they were amazed that the tale which it told was so much longer than they could have fancied. It was so long, indeed, that they could do nothing more than retire to their dressing rooms, in order to put on fresh attire for appearing at dinner. This operation occupied the Right Honourable Lady for full two hours, during three-fourths of which time, Flora was waiting for her in the drawing-room. The second dinner bell rung, but no appearance of my lord. At length a

messenger arrived to inform his lady, that he had been kept late at Tattersall's, and was obliged to go down to the House to hear a friend's maiden speech ; so that he should be obliged to dine any where, meaning at whatever hotel or coffee-house chance or whim might suggest. He added a hope that the fair stranger would accept of this apology for his seeming rudeness.

Lady Fitz Arthur pouted, but instantly recovering herself, said, " I am not at all disappointed at George Edmund's not dining at home ; but I am chagrined at not being able to introduce him to my Flora as soon as I expected." Saying this, she ordered dinner with perfect nonchalance, and the two re-commenced their hunting

of old stories, and pursued it till nearly midnight, at which hour Flora was, in consequence of her recent indisposition; permitted to retire.

In the course of the evening, three visitors were, by her ladyship's orders, dismissed with a fib, (as she called it,) of "gone to a concert;" at which Flora put on that expression of countenance, which the innocent always wear when they are apprehensive that one, for whom they feel, is not doing exactly what is right.

"None of your criticising faces, my dear Flora," said her ladyship; "it is true to the very letter. Where could there be a sweeter or more harmonious concert than your voice and mine? besides, they are three great bores,

(don't start, for their tusks shall not touch you,) namely: a dangling dependant—a musical maniac—and, oh! horrible! my good Lord's tutor; and the bore of having our confidential chit-chat interrupted by them, would have been a greater bore than all the boars of the black forest, of which we used to read such strange tales, all unknown to our good Lady Abbess."

Lord Fitz Arthur came home at two; but, as was supposed from indisposition, did not appear at breakfast, and so the two ladies resolved that they should pass together the morning—that is, from two till five o'clock in the evening—in visiting nursery gardens, and selecting rare plants, flowers and shrubs, for an approaching evening party, the name

of which has now suffered French cookery, and become a *soirée*; at homes, and routs, and turn-outs, not being modern enough for the amateurs of continental manners, although the *soirée* means nothing but an evening assembly, at which may be card-playing, dancing, music, or even common chit-chat. However, the word sounds well, and implies all this,—haply and more.

When the dinner and eight o'clock bell had again rung together, Lord Fitz Arthur was the first in the saloon; and his sprightly wife, with beaming eyes and triumphant countenance, introduced the friend whom she so highly and so deservedly valued.

“Upon my word, Emily,” said the

easy and affable peer, "your friend is something worth seeing. Why, she is the northern star itself, and if she does us the honour to stay some time with us, there will be eclipses in our sphere, and our minor luminaries will hide their diminished heads." Saying this, he offered Flora his arm, and led her to the dining-room, whilst his lady seized his other arm, nodding applause, and observing, "I told you, you should have a treat, and that my Flora was a *fleur parmi les fleurs*. She was the handsomest of thirty-six, all of us pretty girls at the convent; she was, indeed, *la belle parmi les belles*." These words jarred a little upon the ear of Flora, for they brought to her recollection her lost cousin, whose or-

dinary name was Bell ; but the melancholy which this brought across her features only heightened their beauty.

We omitted to mention the rest of the dinner party ; but that is of less consequence, as they were composed of what Lady Fitz Arthur pleased to designate, “ nobody ”—that is to say, a smart young colonel of the foot guards,—in which corps his Lordship had done his parade duty ; the major of the Militia regiment, which he now actually commanded ; and his *ci-devant* tutor, who now nodded over a fat city curacy, which my Lord had procured for him, and the duties of which did not much interfere with the substantial vocation of dining. But though, Flora and her titled friend excepted, the company was

nobody ; the splendour of the table, the richness of the dinner, and all the accompaniments of fruits, ices and wines, were something. The ladies retired at ten, and the gentlemen joined them at midnight, where the conversation first turned upon early acquaintances, school companions, and youthful scenes.

“ These,” said the guardsman, who seemed a systematic speaker, “ are delightful reminiscences. The calling to mind the early acts of life’s eventful dream, produces a very pleasing sensation, similar to that of viewing the portrait of a lost or absent friend ; or examining a faithfully executed delineation of a country, where past happy days have been spent,—the scenery, the localities,—those who have been our

associates, all rush upon the mind, and gain incalculably from the airiness of distance, and the vista of time.”

This remark, though trivial in itself, was well suited to the train of Flora’s meditations, and brought over her a glow of satisfaction, which made her doubly amiable.

The next wave, into which the flexible stream of conversation was formed, was the peer roasting the parson ; or, as he jocularly called it, giving him a turn on the spit, by putting him in mind of sundry uncanonical peccadillos—such as his being out of temper when called from a match at cricket, to the baptising of a child—his mistaking a christening for a marriage, when on duty after dinner—his talking of fox-

hunting all the way to my Lord's uncle's funeral—the passion he was in at getting a counterfeit guinea for the matrimonial fee from a purser in the navy—and his exquisite wit, in which he wished that the said purser might “double Cape-Horn for his pains.”

Although the parson was perhaps a little too much given to cricket, fox-hunting, dining, and the love of money, yet he was what is termed a good-natured man and a great scholar. Of the latter quality, the education of Lord Fitz Arthur was a proof, and the patience with which the parson bore his jokes was a proof of the other; but his Lordship too was good-natured, and repaid the tutor for the function of *butt*, which he filled at the table.

The militia major was a man of more laurels than taste. He cut deep into the haunch of venison, and there never was "day-light in his glass." But he was staunch, and took his own way. When an adjournment to the music-room was proposed, he declined it, saying, that "he would never exchange a glass of wine for the scraping of cat-gut;" but that if they would go to women's amusements, he would adjourn to the Mount Coffee House, and comfort himself with a lobster and a *quantum* of arrack punch.

"*Quel mauvais ton!*" exclaimed the guardsman, as the portly major strode out of the room.

An Italian artist had been furnished, to charm the ladies with vocal and in-

strumental music, and also to commend, as opportunity offered, their own performances on the piano-forte and harp. While the gentlemen were absent, Flora drew commendations both from the Countess and from the professor; but no inducement could make her play in the presence of Lord Fitz Arthur and his two friends. The idea of her doing so had been one of the Countess's chief reasons for commanding the professor to give them his ten guineas-worth of song and sycophancy; and as she was yet too indisposed, both bodily and mentally, for doing it, the music ceased, the tutor took himself off, and the ladies retired before midnight. Not so my Lord and the Colonel; for leaving the music to be its own echo, they had re-

tired into a corner, where *tete-a-tete*, they played at *ecarté*, at which my lord was uniformly second best; but through the strength of a *turkey devil* and burnt champaign, for which he was ever and anon calling, he kept it up till between four and five in the morning, and in consequence did not make his appearance till the same hour on the following day. He then proposed to drive the fair mountaineer to the park in his curricule; but that she declined; upon which his lordship looked fretted, and her ladyship looked rather gloomy; but recovering herself in an instant, she patted him upon the cheek, saying, "My dear George Edmund, I am sure that a gallop would do you more good, for

you really look bilious." "True," said the accommodating lord, and instantly was upon horse and away.

Such is a very fair specimen of the at home life which Flora of Glenmore led for three or four weeks with her gay and fashionable friends, without their being able to prevail upon her to enter into that course, which, in their vocabulary, was denominated enjoyment. Little Mary had the same, or even greater reluctance to enter into the "high life below stairs." She had been but for one day in the servants' apartment, and she declared that she would die rather than be another: she had never seen such waste, or heard such names bestowed in absence, upon those who, when present, received

the most obsequious attention. Mary was, therefore, allowed for some time to keep her own apartment; except when she could steal into that of her mistress; but she uniformly scampered off and locked herself up at the sight of my lord's gentlemen, and even of my lady's ladies.

The melancholy turn of Flora's thoughts, her love of retirement, and her persevering resistance to enter into the vortex of fashion, were severe disappointments to Lord Fitz Arthur. We do not say that he had formed any attachment, either proper or improper, for Flora; but she was beautiful, and what was more to the purpose, she was new; and he hoped to triumph over all his gay and giddy

associates, by bringing her out at a succession of fêtes, and showing her off at all the places of fashionable resort. For three long weeks, however, (and a fashionable week is not short,) she resisted all entreaty, and uniformly went to her chamber before twelve,—generally the hour at which the carriage waited to convey her gay friend to her evening parties.

Once, indeed, she consented to be present at a concert given by the Countess to a few select friends ; but then she contrived to slip off before the hour of supper, and talk with her Highland maid, over the memories of the good Glenmore and the beloved Strathantin.

“Do you know, my leddy,” said

Mary, looking arch, as if she had a wise thing to say, "what this great Lord's house is like?"

"And what is it like, child? something very fine, no doubt," said Flora.

"Mac Chuillanmore's coffin," said Mary.

"Mac Chuillanmore's coffin, child!" said Flora; "there never was a worse comparison made by a silly girl. All here are alive, which was not the case with that."

"May be it was, if it please you, my leddy," said Mary; "for every body says that Mac Chuillanmore walks the earth, and my ain grandfather has seen him fifty times."

"Well, well, Mary," said Flora,

“these are Highland stories, and nobody cares about them here.”

“No, nor about Highland folks neither, any farther than serves their ain ends,” said Mary, with a bitterness which her mistress had never seen, and which she was about to reprove, when she remembered the poor girl’s devotedness to herself, her clan, and her country. “Well, to the point, Mary,” said she, “in what is this house like Mac Chuillanmore’s coffin?”

“It is costly and cauld,” said Mary archly.

“If you do not like it, leave it,” said Flora.

“That was just what I was asking leave to do,” said Mary. “The ser-

vants here gloom at me. I cannot work their work, and I will not eat their bread. Even you cannot be dressed by Mary now, but must have these upsetting leddies about you. They are not good, my dear lady, they are not good. Come with me to some house o' your ain. I have siller ; when that is done I can work for more ; and the Clan-More will never see their chief's daughter at a loss."

As Mary said this, she pulled out a little leathern purse, and counted ten guineas down upon Flora's toilette. "That's from auld Rory, in case o' want," said she in tears, but in triumph. It will last a long time, and God and the gude clan will send more when it is done."

"Put up your money, unless you

wish to offend me," said Flora, a little piqued at the imputation which the girl cast upon her friends, but yet pleased at her frankness.

"And you'll not be for needing me any more!" said Mary, retiring; "an', O my leddy! you'll be staying here till your ain heart be sick, and mine be sair, and the poor au'd Castle be forgotten."

"Never," said Flora, overcome by this appeal; "but leave me in the mean time."

Mary retired to weep for the night; and the eyes of her lovely mistress were not altogether dry.

While Flora was holding this conversation with her maid, she was the topic of talk with the gay ones whom

she had left. The men launched out in her praise, till all the fashionable attributes and epithets of beauty were exhausted ; and the women chimed in, but added their discords of censure, by way of perfecting the critical harmony.

The conversation with Mary had given a fresh tear to the uncicatrized wound in Flora's heart ; and she became, for some time, more retiring than ever. At last, however, Lady Emily literally dragged her to the Opera, where, deeply veiled and seated in the back row of the box, she hoped to escape notice ; but she was mistaken, for no sooner had the oppressive heat forced her to raise her veil, than as many glasses were pointed at her, as, to use his lordship's phrase, would

have discovered the man of the moon, even in an eclipse as total as that which Flora assumed at the opera.

Excuses after this lost their currency, and Flora had either to quarrel with an old friend and present benefactress, or go to a party. This party was upon no less important an occasion than the “coming of age” of Lord Mount Irby, only son to the Earl and Countess of Carrickford, a family nearly related to that of Fitz Arthur. The going cost her less pain than the laying aside of her sable attire; but here too, every thing was sacrificed to fashion. The choice of a dress gave her little concern: one of white crape, with her mother’s little suit of pearls, and small diamond ring, and her

father's ring with the prince's hair—the whole contents of her jewel-box, were all that she could afford, and more than she wished to display.

As she was about to ring her bell, and order madame somebody or other to prepare the crape dress, the Countess entered, and prevented her, by saying that she had “taken the liberty of purveying for her friend, and hoped the dress would be accepted, and please.”

Flora bowed, but could not thank her ladyship.

“Well, well, my peeress,” said Emily, “you have had tears enough, so you must smile for one day, if but to please my good Lord and me.”

Flora promised, and the day rose;

but, as the morning of it wasted, her courage wasted still more rapidly. On the preceding evening, the house of Lord Fitz Arthur resembled an ancient fair, or a modern bazaar. Milliners, dress-makers, plumassiers, florists, hairdressers, jewellers, and porters with bundles and band-boxes of all shapes and sizes, together with bills, billets, smugglers of French lace, and dealers in shoes, gloves, and in short many things that could be named, were continually reeling to and fro. A certain garrulous Lady Ogilby, too, admitted *par malheur*, occupied three hours of the Countess's time, upon the mere subject of dress; and so the choice of ornaments, thus in-

interrupted, had again to be entered upon, and the matter was not completed till midnight. All this, however, passed before Flora as the colouring of a splendid but unimportant dream.

CHAP. V.

God made the country, and man made the town.

COWPER.

SUCH were nearly the thoughts of Flora, as a rouged French milliner girl entered her apartment, displaying the ball dress, exclaiming at all its “*uniques*,” and “*magnifiques*,” and inviting her to try it on; but Flora, without paying much attention to the praises, proceeded to the trial.

“*C'est un plaisir de vous habiller*,” said the girl as she fitted on the dress, and changed her encomiums from that to the wearer.

Flora, anxious to avoid this heartless and unmeaning flattery, and pleased to find a girl who spoke purely a language to which herself had been accustomed in her youth, inquired into the girl's quality; and finding that she was the orphan of "*Un Capitaine*," who had fallen in the service of "*Le Grand Monarque*," she dismissed her with good advice, and such a present as her own circumstances afforded.

The splendid dress, and the near proximity of moving in the galaxy of all that was beautiful, and the circle of all that was happiness and hilarity, produced upon Flora an effect very different from what they usually produce upon girls of her years. She thought more of the peace of the close,

than the palpitation of the commencement; and throwing the gay garb carelessly upon a sofa, her heart went back to the hills of her nativity; so that when she was invited to that airing, which was to procure bloom and spirits for the evening, she was unable, and unprepared to avail herself of it. She was anxious, however, to be correct to her promise, and so she was instantly dressed; and though the attire failed not to draw the commendations of my Lady's lady, who perchance had an eye to the reversionary possession of it, honest Mary could not help saying, that it was not half so becoming "as the tartan of their ain clan."

While Lady Fitz Arthur was suffering the long labours of her third

toilette, Flora went to the harp, and fancying she was alone, struck up in the full tone of its strings, with the sweet accompaniment of her own voice in Gaelic, that lament which had been played by the pipers, while the bier of her father was borne from the castle.

Never, perhaps, was there a more exquisite display of mournful melody; the feverish hand of Flora rang the chords to their utmost pitch, but her own voice trilling with agony, was still higher. Nor was the statuary at all inferior. Lord Fitz Arthur, who passed in the anti-room by accident, was held rivetted there during the song—of which he of course did not understand one word, but it did not on that

account make the less deep an impression.

Two young noblemen had that day dined with the family, and were to accompany them to an evening party at midnight. The one had just returned from his travels, and was so much an exotic in his manners, that he scarcely deigned to speak English; and when he did condescend to honour his mother tongue by using it, it was so interlarded with French and Italian, so accompanied by action and gesture of continental growth, so lisped and drawn out, and so interrupted by the excessive use of the snuff-box and the scented handkerchief, that it appeared the masquerade disguise of chattering, rather than an honest vehicle of speech.

At an early hour of the evening, he made application for Flora's hand at the ensuing ball ; but he made that application in vain.

“ Ha ! what not one waltz, ma petite mignonne ?” said he, in a tone which, though meaning to be very tender, was merely very insipid. But finding that not one jot more successful than the question direct, he comforted himself with another pinch of snuff, as much as to show, that that was all he cared about the matter.

Turning to the Countess, he simpered out, “ Pazienza ! but surely that is not your robe de bal ?”

“ Most assuredly it is not,” said the Countess.

“ Why, upon my *thoul*, it is so handsome, that I was almost in doubt. May I put *une larme de vigne*, into your la’ship’s glass ?”

The other youth actually devoured the fair Highlander with his looks ; and his eyes were so rivetted on her, that the Peer had to reprove, by a very significant glance, an admiration, which though marked and silent, was yet painful to the young stranger. He too applied for the honour of Flora’s hand at the ball, but was refused ; for Flora had promised to dance two quadrilles, the sum total of her exhibition for the evening, with Lady Fitz Arthur.

It was some time before the young Cantab recovered himself ; and as snuff

did not possess for him the same healing virtue, as for the travelled nobleman, he continued to evince, during the night, a very decided preference for Flora.

In the course of the conversation after dinner, the name of Lord Gerald de Brooke was alluded to; and though this happened merely in a casual way, the daughter of Glenmore changed colour at the name.

“Ha!” said the affected nobleman, “I perceive that name is *bien touchant*. I do perceive that Lord Gerald de Brooke is *une elite*—a favourite *par excellence*.”

“Your conclusions are altogether erroneous, my Lord,” said Flora firmly.

“*Bon, bon,*” said his Lordship;

“Gerald is a *sujet mauvais*. His *petites affaires de gallanterie* are well known. He has killed his man in a duel fought in *le bois de Boulogne*, on account of a certain dame *de haute condition*. He has caused the poisoning of a second Right Honourable; and broken the heart of a third.” There is no saying how ample might have been this catalogue, but the Countess, not relishing it very much herself, and perceiving that it gave great pain to her friend, rose from the table and left the room with her.

“Demme, I’m afraid I am in the wrong box,” said the exotic, tapping his splendid *tabatiere*. The peer felt a little uneasy; sent repeatedly to inquire into the effect of this piece of

inconsiderate levity ; and was pleased to learn, that his amiable visitor had either altogether concealed, or altogether recovered from, the shock.

At a little past midnight the two earriages, which were to convey the party to Grosvenor Square, were at the gate.

“ I shall have the honour to consider you as under my especial care for the evening,” said the Earl to Flora, as he handed her into the chariot ; “ and I shall feel quite jealous, if, in the course of it, you suffer any one to have the honour of receiving your arm except myself.”

Flora thanked him, but at the same time thought of the Countess.

On arriving at Grosvenor Square, they encountered every delightful im-

pediment and display—circumstances which were peculiarly promising, as they proved the great number and superior cast of the company assembled, assembling, and obstructed on their way to join.

“All the world is here. I knew it would be a most charming thing,” said the Countess, giving way to the anticipated pleasure of an interminable display of finery. To Flora, however, independently of the reluctance of a first let off in the *haut ton*, the whole seemed little else than irksomeness and loss of time; and yet the appearances were promising enough. The house was one blaze of light, and shone like a meteor; the whole square was crowded with carriages. coachman was emu-

lating coachman, and each seemed more anxious than another to cut out a rival whip; horses were startled and restive, some reared, some backed; there was no sparing of the lash; servants swore, Duchesses, Marchionesses and Right Honourable Misses screamed; a turbulent crowd pressed about the door of the illuminated mansion; pick-pockets and handy lads were on the *qui vive*, and police officers on the look out. The entrance hall seemed fairy-land; for when the host of liveried attendants had been passed, the upper servants of the family, habited in rich green and gold, stood under, and among an accumulation of ever-greens, for which half the nurseries in the metropolis appeared to have been pil-

laged. Then the coloured lamps, the cut crystal, and the thousand glittering things which spangled the scene, so completely disturbed the lights, that not one ray seemed to know upon whom to fall, or in what colour to show itself.

The entrance to the grand stair-case occasioned a confusion as delightful, and a stoppage as complete, as that of the equipages in the square ; only it was rendered a little different by the power which all had of seeing and being seen, as well as by music in every pitch, and from every instrument. Here marched a Turkish band worthy of beating the gong, and shaking the cymbal before a Bashaw of three tails ; there twanged a trio of harpers,

enough to awaken Cadwallader himself out of his grave; and yonder was a chosen nest of bow and rosin men, making all the noise in their power. Saving indeed that instrument, to the sound of which Flora was most habituated, there was not one wanting; and the music, though it did not drown sounds like those which aforetime were drowned by music in the valley of Hinnom, yet served to allow those soft whisperings of candidate partners, those tittering and satirical remarks in *sotto voce*, those self-admirations and adjustings of ornaments, together with what dowager attraction terms “calling up a look,” and all the other weighty movements and matters which filled up the long space of being admitted to the

inner mansion, and arriving at the reception rooms.

All there was in accordance with the rest ; and it seemed as though the whole world had been ransacked, and the spoil crowded into this single dwelling.

It would avail little to enumerate the articles of splendour displayed in the furnishing of the house, and the apprelling of the company ; and it would avail as little to number up the sumptuous viands, the choice wines, and all the other attributes of luxury which were displayed in the different acts of this drama of splendid extravagance. Suffice it to say, that elegant as were the females, and studious as they had been to exhibit themselves to the best

advantage, the jewels were, with but one solitary exception, more splendid than the wearers. That exception was Flora of Glenmore; and never did overweening pomp and exorbitant extravagance meet with a more seasonable reproof, than in the attention which was arrested by her simple habit, and subdued and retiring manner. While countless other beauties—all of whom had had, or were having, their day, were displaying to the blaze of a thousand lights, the greatest breadth of attraction which they could command, Flora stood folded up like a little rosebud, or bent, like the pure and modest cup of the lily, meekly towards the earth. As she leaned upon the arm of

her friend's husband, where she felt that she had protection, the purity or propriety of which no one could question, she instinctively shrunk from the many eyes which were turned upon her. But her shrinking availed her little; her novelty alone would have rendered her an object of interest to both sexes; and when that novelty was accompanied by beauty of the very first class, and a deportment in perfect accordance, and especially when she was under the protection, and seemed to occupy the almost exclusive attention of a man so high in the fashionable world, and so remarkable for his levity, if not of heart, at least of manner, as Lord Fitz Arthur, it was no wonder that the

eyes of many put questions which the mouth of none could, in the mean time, answer.

The effect of her being presented to Lord and Lady Carrickfort was quite electric : feeling that though she was for the first time in the presence of fifty or a hundred Right Honourables, she was yet the daughter of Glenmore, her mind and her manners seemed at once to rise with the occasion, and though the courtesy with which she returned their congratulation and their compliment was soft and modest, yet there was a feeling and an expression of dignity in it, which could not have been shown by the most haughty titled dame in the assembly. This did not pass unnoticed by the company ; for immediately the

whisper ran that she must be some great personage, perchance some foreign princess incognito; nor was the curiosity much abated in those to whom his Lordship of the snuff-box was enabled to communicate the two particulars—that she was the heiress, the female chief of a great Highland clan, and that she had been agitated, and had left the room when the conversation turned casually on Lord Gerald de Brooke. The first of those circumstances opened a hundred desires for the gratification of curiosity; and the latter seemed a fertile soil in which, if necessary, the seeds of envy might produce an abundant return. The old peer, as he hobbled along under the double burden of decay and gout, be-

came, in compliment at least, a youth for her sake ; and ran over the whole muster-roll of compliments with the celerity of a beau of the first water in the first winter. Nor was it mere idle compliment with him ; for he was a man of tact and discernment, and had been through life equally remarkable for the correctness of his taste and of his conduct.

His commendations were instinctively taken up by all the sensible males of the party ; and the nonsensical part, those who had been invited in to round the party, also echoed his words as a matter of course. Nor was the effect which she produced momentary ; for if her introduction was prepossessing ; if her first promenade over the suite of apart-

ments was dignified, her dancing was grace itself. So perfect, indeed, were her movements, that she arrested the attention of the whole party ; and not only exhausted and beggared earthly terms in the similitudes to which she was likened, but made serious inroads upon the personifications of fancy. She was the “tenth Muse,” the “fourth Grace,” the “one for whose sake all Muses and Graces were forgotten ;” and even the most determined gamblers of the assembly dropped their cards in mid-game to catch a glance of her. Her own sex, though they too admired, or used the language of admiration, in expectance, perhaps, that a change of wind might bring it round to themselves, mingled their criticisms in whispers apparently

addressed to each other, yet always so calculated as to fall upon some male ear.

All this was exceedingly gratifying to Lord Fitz Arthur, who seemed not only extremely proud of his companion, but, to very scientific eyes at least, betrayed symptoms of a tender interest in her fate, if not in herself, which was not lost upon the comment-loving ladies, who abound pretty much in the higher spheres.

Above all, the hero of the fête—the only son—he to whom all were expected to look, and for whose honour the whole display had been made—Lord Mount Irby seemed transfixed with wonder,—wonder which gradually softened into delight: forgetting every other female in the room, he followed her

with his eyes, and, when he could, with his steps. When she had finished the proposed measure of her dancing, he went up to her, and, with a confusion which could not be concealed, begged her to dance but one quadrille with him. Having refused this to others, her look to him was, at first, a look of refusal ; but her protector whispered to her that to deny such a favour to the heir of the house on the night of his own festivity, would, on every account, be held as contrary to the canons of court society. He promised to be her vis-a-vis. She accepted the invitation, and herself and her youthful partner, who was really interesting, drew forth very warm and very general commendations.

The old lord was very much pleased, and could not help whispering to Fitz Arthur, that the Countess Dowager of Devonport watched his fair cousin "like an old cat watching a Canary bird."

That Countess, indeed, was not altogether at her ease upon the occasion ;—having four vendible daughters of her own, one of whom she had kept back for a month, in order to play her off as a second novelty, and captivate, if possible, the young lord ; but, seeing her completely thrown into the back ground by this "Caledonian interlopper," as she termed her, she sat herself down, in good earnest, to anatomize the artless and unsuspecting Flora, for the benefit, not only of her daughters, but of all the hearers whom she could command. When

Flora promenaded the apartments in silent modesty, the Countess described her as a raw country girl; and when she moved in the dance, light and graceful as a thing of air, then “she was as forward as a French coquette.”

The triumph of Flora was, in short, felt, in some shape or other, by every one save herself. The scene, splendid though it was, was painful from the contrast of her own ruined hopes and desolate state, and the pain was increased by the increasing attention which made her feel as though she was a kind of show. These circumstances heightened the interest of her appearance, by giving the most exquisite touch of sensibility to her beauty; but the unusual and the unnatural part

which she was forced to play, bore heavy upon her ; the night, which was long by the clock, was much longer by her feelings, and, when the morning sun lighted her to her chamber, she could not help asking herself, “ Can this be pleasure ?”

Her friends, however, had no such questions to ask. On their way home, they said a thousand obliging things, and if Flora had had an ear for flattery, the flattery which they bestowed on her might have been highly gratifying ; but though she felt pleasure at seeing her friends pleased, she was not sensible to any of those important consequences which they both predicted would result from the effect which she had produced at the party.

On the following evening, (for the sun could hardly wait to light the breakfast table) a number of visitors had been drawn to Portland Place, by the rumour of a star of the first magnitude having made its appearance there. Cards of invitation, in all of which her name was inserted, were literally rained upon the breakfast table; but the object of all this curiosity and admiration had no desire to quit her room, reserving herself for a *tete a tete* with her dear friend the Countess, who entered her apartment with looks and feelings very different from those of the preceding night, and let Flora into the secret, that even in the very first circles of fashion, pleasure is not the perpetual feeling; and

that though the splendour of the four quarters of the world may be collected at an entertainment, still that entertainment may bring its bitterness, and ultimately teach those who seem to enjoy it most at the time, the propriety of putting such a question, as she had put to herself. The ere-while lively Emily had been in tears; her eyes were still red, her brows were clouded, and she seemed anxious to unbosom that which it was evidently painful to keep.

“George Edmund has been cross to me, my dear Flora,” said she. “He has been very cross—never was he so cross in his life before. He said many unkind things about my expenses during the winter. Now, though I have been a little naughty, in running up

bills, he might have told me sooner, and even now there was no occasion for his speaking so unkindly.” “He cannot be unkind to you,” said Flora.

“But he is unkind, though,” replied the Countess, her eyes filling with tears, “and I think he gets tired of me. I was often told, that very fashionable husbands grow weary of their wives’ attractions, and flirt. Now I could pardon a little flirting; but if I thought he seriously preferred another, it would break my heart.”

“Prefer another!” said Flora; “that is impossible; you do violence both to your own merits and to your good Lord’s taste.”

“Well, well, my dear Flora,” said the Countess, restored to good humour

by this unintended stroke of adulation ;
“ but you must not fail to come down to dinner, for, do you know, there is really nobody that can put George Edmund so soon into good humour as yourself.” Saying this, she caught Flora in her arms—pressed her to her bosom, and left the room.

Flora thought the conversation a little singular ; but as she knew nothing of intrigue, and had nothing of suspicion in her character, she was more anxious to see an undisturbed harmony between the Countess and his Lordship ; and therefore she failed not to attend at dinner, where she strove so to engage them in conversation with herself, and with each other, that long before the dinner was over, the little

breach seemed to be completely healed. The Peer not only staid at home for that evening, but also declined an invitation to a great dinner at the Club on the following day, and disappointed some gaming acquaintance, by not appearing at Lady Ogilby's "at home" on the night after. This domestic turn in his Lordship was very agreeable to the Countess, and Flora felt increased happiness in witnessing that of her friend.

CHAP. VI.

Talk not to me of pomp,—the weeping willow
Is all my splendour now: Talk not of lands,—
One little spot of earth, six feet by two,
I'd not exchange for kingdoms.

EVERY morning brought Lord Mount Irby an anxious visitor to Portland Place; and when he did not gain admittance, he watched the motions of the family, and contrived to join them in their ride, their drive, or their shopping perambulations; and it was apparent to all but Flora herself, that the flame which had been kindled at the birth-day ball, was one which burned

every day more and more fiercely. Flora, however, had no desire for the attentions of his Lordship, and though she treated him, as indeed she treated every human being, with politeness, her heart and her affections were with the distant, and the dead; and every moment which she could steal from that career of gaiety, to which her friends had introduced her, was spent with Highland Mary, in counting over the virtues of her lost father and lover, and planning schemes for the deliverance of her favourite clan from the clutches of those harpies of the law, who were now enjoying the revenues which ought to have been hers, and sucking the blood of her people. Her poor lost cousin Isabella, too, engaged a

portion of her solicitude, and of her regret. She long feared that Lord Gerald had deserted his unfortunate victim ; that fear was increased by the character of his Lordship, which formed a mighty item of the fashionable gossip ; and it was soon confirmed by a letter from her friends, stating, that they had traced his Lordship as far as Paris, which city he had entered alone, and whence he had departed, accompanied by a Lady of that capital, equally remarkable for the elevation of her rank, and the unbounded license of her gallantries.

A brother of Isabella, a retired captain, who had got more wounds than wealth in the service of his country, finding that his sister was no where to

be discovered, posted off to call his Lordship to account. He found him living at Venice in all the pomp and *hauteur* of a Bashaw, and all the luxury of an Italian Prince; and, waiting his opportunity, he accosted him just as he was stepping into a gondola, with these words, "Wretch, knowest thou aught of Isabella Mackay?"

"And what is it to thee, miscreant, if I do?" was the reply.

"Only, that I am her kinsman and avenger," was the rejoinder, accompanied by a pretty smart application of the assailant's cane to the shoulders of the Peer.

"Are you a gentleman, or a fellow whom my gondoliers may pitch into the water?" said Lord Gerald, rising in

dignity, and condensing himself into a cold sternness of manner. Young Mackay answered not in words, but, throwing off his cloak, displayed the dress of his regiment, decorated with more than two orders of merit.

“In one hour we meet, be it where you will,” said his Lordship, tossing the address of a Venetian Count to the soldier, sitting down in his gondola, and rowing off as if nothing had happened. They met; both fell at the first fire; and though the soldier, upon being lifted up, demanded a second, his right hand and arm were so shattered, that they were forced to be parted for the time. Lord Gerald was carried to the baths at Lucca; and he contrived to get the soldier, who recovered but

slowly, removed, so as to prevent a future meeting.

While Flora was agitated by these reports, she was destined to be the object of fresh vicissitudes. Lord Mount Irby's attachment to her assumed the regular form, and his choice seemed to meet with the perfect acquiescence of his parents; the old Earl, indeed, hesitated not to joke with his friends, and even to take a pleasure in hearing Flora called by the name of daughter.

A general officer, a particular friend of his, was, at a dinner-party one day, rallying the old Peer on the effect which the presence of Flora seemed to have had upon his health and spirits. "Your lordship really knows how to levy contributions upon the sex," said the

general ; “ you have foraged upon this lady for a new lease of your own life.”

“ Not at all,” said his lordship ; “ I am but a tenant at will, with the tenement much out of repair ; but had I a daughter like this, her society would strew my decline of life with flowers, and give, at least to the mental part of it, an appearance of a second spring.”

Flora looked a little confused ; and the colour upon Lord Fitz Arthur’s cheek went and came in a very perceptible but inexplicable manner.

Next day, Lord and Lady Carrickfort called at Portland Place, and begged a private interview with Lord and Lady Fitz Arthur, upon business of the utmost importance. This was neither

more nor less than to make a circumstantial inquiry into Flora's family and connections, and to state the pleasure that they would derive from seeing her adopted into the house of Carrickfort. The old lord hinted, that the settlement he would make her, should be every way worthy of the daughter of Glenmore, who really seemed far richer in her native worth, than if she had been lady of every mountain and muir north of the Tweed, and held the whole unincumbered.

During the time that this was on the tapis, a gradual illness came across Lord Fitz Arthur ; he complained of cramp in his stomach ; he pleaded that as an excuse for withdrawing ; and the

proposers of the match, having finished their mission, retired in triumph.

Lady Fitz Arthur hastened to the chamber of her friend as the ambassador of the glad tidings of affectionate love and high connection. As the Countess opened the door, she heard the tone of the harp, and the voice of Flora thrilling in an agony of grief,

“ May be to return to Lochaber no more.”

Entering, she found Flora in tears,—the melancholy line having embodied to her, in one touching image, the whole of what she had hoped, what she had lost, and what she still feared.

This was no mood during which to break abruptly a matrimonial proposal,

and so the Countess proceeded gradually, first to win Flora from her melancholy, and then to disclose her mission, and press it upon her friend in the most anxious yet most delicate manner. Flora heard her with mute attention, and the Countess was startled, when at the end of the proposal, Flora, without the least hesitation, expressed an unqualified refusal, and backed it by a prayer that the subject might never again be named to her.

“ Poor Flora !” thought the Countess to herself, as she went to inquire after her Lord, and state to him the unexpected issue of her mission—“ so forlorn, so unprotected, so ruined in fortune, you might have wedded afflu-

ence and happiness, but you seem to wed nothing but adversity and grief."

"What news?" said his Lordship.

"A full and final refusal," said the astonished Countess.

"Bravo, the blood of the Highlands!" said his Lordship; "I feel so much better, that I believe I shall dress and have the pleasure of Flora's—I mean of your and Flora's company at dinner."

At that dinner his attention to his visitor was so marked, that it gave herself pain; had, as she thought, a very unpleasant effect upon the Countess; and in the end, turned round and wounded himself, till the party, which had been begun with so much

promise, ended in the Countess going to the Opera, his Lordship to the club, and Flora to her Highland music and her Highland maid.

His Lordship played deep, lost his money,—and domestic jars, which seemed every day to increase, were the regular morning exercise of himself and the Countess. Flora felt quite unhappy. She perceived, on the one hand, that the attachment of her noble host was every day weaning itself from a wife who merited other treatment at his hands, and to whom she herself was bound, as well by gratitude as by the most immutable friendship; on the other hand, his devotion to herself had grown almost to madness; had become the object of general ob-

servation, and, as such, must have been giving pain to a dear friend, who had afforded her an asylum and treated her with the most unremitting kindness. Flora's own conscience acquitted her of all positive guilt on this subject; she had neither provoked the attention of his Lordship, nor in the very slightest manner indulged in these fashionable levities of flirtation, which are so general in the upper ranks of life; but still the pain to her Emily was not one jot the less. She saw the dilemma in which she was placed, and resolved, though quietly, to adopt the only and immediate means of escaping from it. She instantly took measures for procuring a situation, in which the exercise of her

talents and accomplishments might make her, in the mean time, independent of the hazards to which she felt herself exposed in fashionable society ; and determined to trust to the issue of chance, for a proper regaining of her home and hopes in her own country, of which she had never altogether despaired.

Having taken this resolution, she instantly set about restoring, as far as kind offices could restore it, the harmony between Lord Fitz Arthur and his wife, which she had so unintentionally broken.

Flora had no idea that the partiality which Lord Fitz Arthur had evinced for her, had the least reference to criminal passion, and this made her kind

offices more agreeable in the performance, and more successful in the result. Her conduct could not fail to endear her to both, and, before she left the family, she saw them in enjoyment of confidence, as mutual and as complete as that which she witnessed on her first entrance into it. Was Lord Fitz Arthur's partiality for Flora a willing dereliction and abandonment of that faith which he owed to his own wife? No; it was rather the blameable weakness of a giddy man of pleasure, who had entered into the wedded state with very little reflection, and who had chosen a woman merely for her beauty, and because she was sought by others. Thus he had never dreamt of changing his manner of life; nor considered

what would be most likely to ensure domestic felicity. Fashion and dissipation had still charms for him. He loved Emily, but he was ever wavering betwixt the follies and prejudices of high life, and what he owed to more serious duties. Farther, it was his misfortune as well as his fault, to find that his heart was yet unsteady, and that more powerful attractions and charms, and higher mental fascinations and endowments than those of his Countess, had an influence over his inclinations, which he wanted fortitude and self-control to resist. How much precaution, therefore, is necessary on both sides, ere the hymeneal knot be tied ! How light its fetter, when fastened by true love grounded on esteem ; but how

painfully weighty, when altered sentiment and cold disappointment follow the regretted bond ! Nor can we dismiss this subject without holding out a caution to artless, unthinking beauty, ever to be on its guard against those elegant triflers of husbands, who pass a great part of their time in flirting away the imaginations, hearts, and reputations of young women—who, under the privilege of married men and protectors of the softer sex, infuse the poison of flattery into the inexperienced mind, and win their victims imperceptibly by elegant attentions and unwearied assiduities, which pass not unobserved by the spies of slander and detraction, and which always create uneasiness in the bosom, and often end in ruin. But

let us return to the Highland maiden, who, chaste as the snow-drop, was never assailable by such snares as we have described.

In a short time, a situation, promising many advantages, presented itself. It was that of governess in the family of the Duchess Dowager of Tynedale,—who stated that she had been left a widow in her youth, but had had the good sense not to give a step-father to her children. Her dowry was ample, but the fortunes of her three daughters, her only children, were rather circumscribed, and so she resolved to educate them in an economical manner, allowing as much as possible of the interest of their money, and her own annuity, to accumulate; observing, that

ten or fifteen thousand pounds, with a Right Honourable wife, were but a scanty portion. Under those circumstances, she said, a very superior education, an observance of economy, a cultivation of all the domestic virtues, and a very temperate taste for pleasure, were quite necessary objects; and no woman was better fitted to forward the accomplishment of these objects than the daughter of Glenmore,—no one could unite precept and example more perfectly than herself. Besides, the improvement of her mind had begun early, had been unremittingly carried on, and was complete,—not only had the graces and accomplishments been bestowed on her in the most lavish manner, but her father had, after her

return from the continent, made the instructing of her in literature and the sciences the delightful employment of many a day ; while her having managed the domestic concerns of the Castle, had given her experience in the conducting of household affairs. Thus accomplished, the Duchess regarded her as a treasure, and objected to her but one fault, viz. that she was too handsome. But as it had been buzzed about, that Flora had decidedly rejected two Coronets, those of Lord de Brooke, and Lord Mount Irby, no rivalship of her and her pupils had to be dreaded. She was, therefore, received with pleasure, and her modest demand of one hundred pounds a year, with permission to keep her Highland attendant—

paying her board wages out of her own salary, was not thought extravagant ; though indeed the latter clause, that of paying for Mary's board, was not struck out.

The great difficulty was, how Flora should take leave of her hospitable friends ; and it cost her many falterings of the tongue, and many flutterings of the nerves, ere she could come to the point. This however was, after much hesitation, and many unsuccessful attempts, got over ; and Flora bade adieu to her kind-hearted friend. On Lord Fitz Arthur's return, (for he had been at Newmarket, during the separation of his Countess and her friend) he was in perfect astonishment, and seemed to doubt the testimony both of eyes and

ears, as to the fact of Flora's absence. He upbraided his wife for having allowed the heiress of an ancient family to become governess to an upstart Duchess, and the slave of capricious girls, who would break her heart. At one time, he was for writing her to come back ; at another, he was for giving her Grace a lesson how she ought to treat one who was so much her superior. But he did neither ; for he was gloomy for a few days, and then, as he found that, in her new situation, Flora declined all titled visitors, and indeed all male visitors whatever, he relapsed into his former levity ; his alternate gaming abroad and gossiping at home. Lord Mount Irby, too, to take off the shame and the sorrow of his want of success,

set out upon his travels ; so that she, who, a few weeks before, had been the grand star of attraction in the fashionable circles, subsided into an industrious, if not an efficient governess, in the house of the Duchess.

CHAP. VII.

Your gold is your only nobility. It can put a Coronet on the brows and Crowns in the pocket ; and it comes you in the stead of ancestry and wisdom. Merit is in sooth a mock to it.

OLD PLAY.

THE glow-worm of hopeful expectation glitters only in the path of the inexperienced ; for the way-worn traveller knows full well its treachery, and places confidence in something more substantial and permanent. Flora's career through life had been short ; but her probation in the school of ad-

versity had brought her knowledge above her years, and moulded her to a steadiness under suffering known to few of her sex. She foresaw smiles and welcomes at the commencement of a vocation—unlooked for, and unbecoming her birth; but she neither overvalued nor overtrusted these. To merit success, was what she aimed at; but to command it, was, she feared, presumptuous even to think upon. On arriving at her new abode, she requested that she might remain no longer with the family than to receive her instructions, as the parting with Lady Fitz Arthur had rather unfitted her for society.

“Very true, my dear,” said the Duchess of Tynedale; “her la’ship is a good-natured woman, a little too light,

and too expensive or so, but a good body.”

Flora could not help being a little piqued at hearing her friend talked of with so much levity.

“But,” continued her Grace, “my second footman shall order any refreshment you may choose to have, and your Highland Hottentot shall be taken care of. ’Pon my rank and honour, she puts me in mind of a goblin waiting-woman. Good bye, child—good bye.”

Flora, taking her Highland Hottentot with her, withdrew somewhat at a loss how to interpret the language of the Duchess. She rose in the morning little refreshed ; and had paced the breakfast-room for two full hours and a half, at the end of which period the Duchess

made her *entrée, en robe de chambre*, and rather more *en deshabille* than Flora had been accustomed to.

“I must really take some æther,” said her Grace, on entering; “the racketings about in the *grande monde* quite knock me up; I sha’nt be sorry, that I sha’nt, when we go to the Priory.”

“I am sorry to find that your Grace is indisposed,” said Flora, at a loss for a corresponding answer to the words in which the Duchess had addressed her.

“O la! a trifle child, a mere trifle; ’twill go off with some of the genuine green tea. But *a-propos*, here are my three Graces,—the first, you must know, is Grace by name as well as Grace

by nater ; she is my eldest daughter ; Lady *Grace* the *Grace* ; this next is Lady Mary, the wit ; and yonder third is Lady Susan, the sentimentator. Lady Grace dances like a very divinity ; Lady Mary sings like a cherub ; and my youngest writes well enough to make a fortune. *Entre nous*, she is a poet, but you may well suppose that the daughters of a Duke disdains to have any thing to do with printer folks.”

The young ladies shook Flora coolly by the hand ; the green tea was poured out, and the Duchess, catching inspiration from it, continued :—

“My eldest daughter is the very image of the Duke ; Mary is thought like me,” (here Mary turned on her

mother a look composed of one-third doubt, and two-thirds denial); “and Lady Susan—why I really don’t know whom she is like, unless it be my uncle, who was twice Lord Mayor of the city of London.”

“La! what stuff,” said the poetess, tossing her head; “this cannot be very amusing to a stranger.

“You are a saucy puss,” replied her Grace, patting her on the cheek, and thereby indicating that the three Graces sometimes made inroads upon the throne and power of old Juno herself; and Flora, anxious to give a new turn to a conversation which was neither profitable nor pleasing, respectfully inquired into the plan of instruction for the day.

“Why, to-day, child,” said the Duchess ; “let me see—”

“You must not see, mamma,” said the Lady Grace ; “for at three, my miniature is to be taken.” “And at half after four you have company to practise a quadrille,” said her lady mother.

“And I,” said Lady Mary, “am engaged to ride with Cavendish Comsey.”

“Yes, and I,” said Susan, “promised to finish a sonnet for the old Duke, and must afterwards show myself in the Park for fear we should all be forgotten.”

“That’s impossible,” replied mamma.”—“I mean,” resumed the third Grace, “forgotten at Lady Golbourn’s fancy ball, for Tuesday.”

“That we wo’nt,” quoth the Duch-

ess ; “ she knows what’s what better than to leave out a **Duchess Dowager** and her three daughters.”

Thus ended the deliberation ; and, as the deliberations of more sage and solemn personages sometimes end, it closed with a resolution, that nothing should be done ; and so Flora was again permitted to retire into her own apartment, until eight o’clock should summon her to the dinner party.

“ I’m thinking,” said Mary, as she was arranging her mistress’s little wardrobe and her few books, “ that **Duchesses** are nae better than the ither great ladies ; and that this house will be as unlike the castle of Glenmore, as that which we hae left ; only there’s this

consolation here, that we're working for ourselves, and no obliged to them."

"True, Mary," said Flora, "and we must learn to think for ourselves without speaking about it."

"That is just what I was going to propose," said Mary; "for the folks here seem to have lang enough tongues for speaking for themselves and for us too."

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Fitz Arthur, who, leaving her card with the Duchess, had come to pass an hour with her friend, and put her in possession of such sketches of the Duchess and her family, as would enable her to conduct herself in a proper manner.

His Grace of Tynedale was one of

those negative characters who do very little good or harm in life ; who vapour at a drawing-room, occupy a right hand place at a dinner, subscribe to all follies, and belong to all clubs. Such a man is, however, a very legitimate subject for a tool, and accordingly his Grace was marked out by a party, who persuaded him that his influence and his consequence would throw great weight into the scale of opposition. He knew and cared very little about politics, but his vanity was flattered by being thus sought for as a pillar, (he was, in fact, a mere leaning post) and so he joined in what he called “stemming the tide of ministerial authority, and counterpoising the frightful preponderance of the Cabinet,”—expressions which he

borrowed from the secretary of a committee ; but that committee *borrowed* of him in its turn ; and, at a certain contested election, he found himself *minus* in sixty thousand pounds spent, lent, and laid out ; in return for which he had been chaired, and, on the occasion, his own “frightful preponderance” was felt by those who upheld him. He had, also, the honour of sitting, day after day, as president of the committee, until he fell asleep, and of filling the chair at the dinners given to the worthy and independent electors, till he was carried speechless from the same. The company lost little by this, but his banker’s book began to admonish him, that it was time to turn over a new leaf.

His Grace now gave up politics,

and bethought him of wedlock ; but, as Paddy says, “ he liked matrimony, only when it chimed with patrimony.” An acute-nosed terrier of a lawyer, who was his agent, ferretted out for him Miss Geraldine Amelia Hyde, only daughter of Daniel Hyde of the city of London, and of Bermondsey, Esq., citizen and tanner ; and the ducal mantle and coronet were proposed in exchange for calf-skin and cow-horn,—at least, his Grace was fain to “ hang a calf-skin on his recreant limbs,” little heeding, though the horn should be added to the bargain. Seventy thousand pounds, ready cash, were paid down for the honour, with a reversion of as nearly as much more, when Daniel Hyde, Esq. should

be hidden in his native earth. Her Grace Geraldine Amelia suffered not very long in wedlock with her spouse, who fretted, that he had no heirs male, and that his estates would go to a distant branch of the family. He fell a victim to strong passions, in the seventh year of his wedded life ; and left her Grace a dowager title, which she was too prudent to exchange for any thing that could be offered her. The seven years of ducal training which she had received, and the occasional dips into high life which her own reversionary honour afforded her, had not entirely worn off the feelings of early life ; and so her Grace vacillated between a had-been cit, and a would-be lady, with much of the haugh

tiness of the latter, and not a little of the characteristic elegance of the former.

Lady Grace the Grace, was of majestic stature and lofty bearing ; her features were regular, but bold ; her eyes were dark and full, but fiery ; her nose hesitated between the Roman and the Jew ; and her whole air told at once that pride was the predominant feature of her character. Lady Mary had little wicked grey eyes, a fine complexion, and an acute prying expression of face ; but there was in her appearance—an air ignoble, as the French would term it, which defied all dress and spoiled all address ; and made the lace and jewels, with which she was bedizened, appear as though they hung upon the

hooks of a shop for sale, rather than upon a wearer, with whom they were mutually graced and gracing. Lady Susan, the "sentimentator," was what is called a barn-door or milk-maid beauty, blooming, and with something roguish in her expression. To this she attempted to add what she considered a look of mind, but never was there a more gross or unsuccessful hoax attempted to be played on old nature. She was, however, a walking romance ; and having heard, that the pensive had the finest effect upon a female face, she had tried it ; but that too would not suit. Perchance she was like her uncle, the spirit dealer, whose character at home was that of a frolicsome wag, and whose life abroad had been short and merry,

and closed by a swinging bankruptcy. What a Harlequin race ! What Birmingham nobility !

These descriptions being completed, Lady Fitz Arthur parted with her friend, assuring her that her heart and purse would always be at her command ; and entreating her not to remain where she was, unless she experienced respectful and kind treatment.

Flora thanked her, and was about to take up a book to read, when the thunder of her Grace's tall footman made her almost start from her chair, and the high key in which the Duchess's voice was pitched, served to let the world know she was " At Home." On this evening the family went to the Opera, and conde-

scended to take the *Governess* with them ; for Flora was invited in a manner, which told her that she must consider it as an honour. She endeavoured to excuse herself ; but her Grace hinted, that when she gave invitations, she was not in the habit of being refused. Besides it would be beneficial to her daughters, as she must speak nothing to them but French, and if there was any thing in the opera which they did not understand, she could, by explaining it, save them the trouble of referring to the printed book. “ For,” added she, “ they have sadly neglected their Italian.” Flora felt the force of the *compliment* thus paid to her, and bowed in acknowledgment

of it, with an expression indicating more of patience and submission, than of satisfaction and hope.

During that half of the performance at which the family was present, beaux fluttered round the box, like butterflies over a bed of tulips ; and the Duchess, so far from seeming anxious to impede, or even to observe them, turned to Flora, who did not appear altogether easy on the occasion, and said, " My daughters must not be minded, child ; far less interfered with. They can listen to small talk, like other girls of quality ; but I can answer for them, and trust them any where."

Flora bowed, and it was as much as

to say, she had come there to learn, and not to teach.

Lady Grace seemed to command, Lady Mary to reign, and Lady Susan was quite giddy with pleasure. "There," said she to her sister, "do you see yonder dear creature, Sir Harcourt Walsingham? What an exquisite he is; how his very affectation charms me. He is certainly an accomplished, well-bred indescribable: how monstrously sorry I am that Percy Sedley is on guard to-day, we should otherwise have had a precious lot of anecdote and small talk." Just then the box was beset, and Lady Susan appeared to be absent and pensive, and not to know what was said to

her. A battery of glasses was raised opposite Flora, but she escaped from this fire, under cover of the opera book, and felt greatly relieved when she found herself returned to Tynedale house, alone and in her own apartment.

The noon of the next day arrived, but there was yet no sign of education. Signor Contralto, indeed, called to give a lesson in vocal music, but was dismissed with his ticket, which ensured the fee of his visit without the labour. At one o'clock, the Duchess and Lady Mary graced the breakfast-room; at two, Lady Susan joined them; half an hour after, a waiting-woman brought intelligence that Lady Grace would take her coffee in bed; and by three,

the breakfast was in progress towards its termination.

Flora by this time began to regard her place as a sinecure, or at least one which would give her no trouble, but humiliation. She again begged to know whether her pupils would be pleased to read French or Italian, or draw, or take a lesson on the harp, when Lady Mary, the wit, putting herself in a tragic attitude, ranted, in a very fustian key for a lady of quality,

“ Neither, sweet saint, if either thee displease ;”

then laughing full in Flora’s face, she turned upon her heel, and left the room.

A suffusion of the deepest crimson—the crimson of indignation, at the

insult, and yet more of shame at the manners of her pupil, covered Flora's face, which she bent upon the ground.

This was perceived by the Duchess, who said, or rather sang, and that in a key at least a full octave higher than Flora had been accustomed to, "La! what mock modesty, child; how can you be so stupid? You don't yet know half the *esprit* which that 'ere Lady, Mary the wit, has got about her. Why she is a-practising, as she and Colonel Sedley are a-going to a masquerade together, in the customs and characters of Juliet and Romeo."

"Oh, then," said Flora, "I ought not at all to wonder at her playing upon me."

"Never a bit," said her Grace; "we

shall have enough of her playing upon us all, I'll be bound."

"Well, then," said Flora, "will your Grace have the goodness to state what the occupations of these ladies are to be to-day?"

"I'll draw," said Lady Susan, "if you'll superintend the concern."

"With pleasure, madam," returned Flora, glad to find any thing that would prevent either the remarks of the family upon her, or her reflections upon them.

The Duchess limited the labour to this individual, by stating that Lady Mary had letters to write, and, that "Lady Grace must keep her chamber, as she has got the head-ach, and don't look becoming at all."

As soon as the Duchess had left them to themselves, Lady Susan set to her drawing, and made a sort of attempt at the delineation of a flower, but both her skill and her patience failing her, she soon came to Flora, saying, “Flosey, do, that’s a dear girl, finish this flower for me, in your very, very best style, as I want to show it to an old beau of mine, and pass it off, *vous m’entendez bien* ;” and she added laughing, “by the bye, we have christened you Prudentia; may we call you so without offence?”

“Why, madam,” said Flora, “I have but one little objection to the name, which is, that it is not my own; but at any rate I shall strive to merit it.”

Flora sat down to finish the drawing

which was to be passed off, and her pupil in the meantime sat down to read. The book was the "Monk," which she huddled up, as she termed it, and put it under the sofa cover, and then *found* another of too light a nature for her perusal, written by *Pigault le Brun*, which she wished to have read to her, while she got her hair dressed *en papillote*. Floragravely informed her, that she never read productions of this kind, and warned her pupil against them.

"Fiddle, faddle," quoth the Lady Susan, "I delight in that charming book, *Pigault le Brun*, and as for the Monk, curiosity led me to peep into it, but be assured I did not send for it in my own name; Miniken, my woman, is handy at getting these things."

A string of saddle-horses and carriages put an end to the conversation, and Lady Susan, intimating that they brought the quadrillers, who were come for a second practising, added, "Prudentia, my dear, you must now leave us, for we cannot be disturbed in the dance; and besides, you might cause *des distractions* to our cavaliers."

Flora gladly obeyed; but, in a few minutes, a verbal message was sent after her, intimating that their Ladyships wanted one to make up the set. With this she refused to comply, for which Lady Grace censured, and all but scolded her, at the dinner table; and the three Graces, although they talked with each other about capital partners, and the delightful *vis a vis*, were distant

toward their governess ; and when they went out to a concert, left her at home, which intended mortification was, to her, the greatest possible relief.

Next *evening*, immediately after breakfast, the Duchess intimated a desire to see Flora alone, upon particular business, and commenced her discourse by saying, that the governess must not mind a little capriciousness of temper in her dear children, who had never been used to contradiction, and all would be well again. That they must have a holiday for that day at least, and then begin seriously to practise their accomplishments under her eye. Lowering her voice, and assuming an air of great confidence, she assured Flora, that she had important matches

in view for them. She had determined that they should never marry any man without a title, a settlement of three times their fortunes, two sets of horses and separate carriages, with two footmen, each unconnected with the livery of the house. One of them, she added, in a whisper, was engaged to the Duke of Quincey, "a man of eighty, and just upon the go." (Here she looked very knowing, and laughed.) The Lady Grace was wavering between a very rich Earl, and a less rich, but very elegant Marquis. Here, however,—upon a carriage driving up to the door, she shook Flora heartily by the hand, and withdrew, leaving her a second time to the pleasure of seeing a very different

woman of quality, her beloved Emily, who now appeared in excellent spirits, from her husband having become exceedingly kind and attentive, abandoned the gaming table, and devoted himself to the interests of his family.

There was a small dinner party that day ; and the three Graces, from the indulgence of their holiday, and other indulgencies, were all smiles, and condescended to cast good-natured looks upon their governess. Flora was placed beside an old clergyman, the curate of the parish in which the Priory was situated, and as the Duchess wished to stand well in that quarter, he came in as a corner dish at her great entertainments, but always at a certain dis-

tance, and at the side of some humble neighbour. Even here, however, Flora was not altogether safe from the artillery of pride and envy, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP VIII.

“ Better to weep with those that weep,
And share the afflicted’s smart,
Than mix with fools in giddy joys,
That cheat and wound the heart.”

LOGAN.

IN the interval between the first and second courses, Lord Gerald de Brooke became the subject of conversation. It was mentioned, that the state of his health had been very precarious ever since he had been severely wounded in a duel, by a gentleman, whose sister he had ruined ; and the person who gave the information, expressed his regret, that one of so high talents and endowments as his lordship, should be so

heartless and profligate in his manners.

Upon this, Lady Susan volunteered in his defence, eulogised him most extravagantly, and stated that it was just because he was so great as a scholar and so powerful as a poet and an orator, that men of meaner powers and less noble souls, were roused to envy that which they were unable to imitate, and find fault with a character, which they wanted capacity and spirit to copy after. The grand point for her eulogy was the admiration in which he was held by all "clever" women, and the ready hold which he took of their affections; and she regretted exceedingly, that he had not at once shot the Highland savage,

who, without any personal quarrel, had, in cold blood, sought the life of one so much his superior, and that upon so slender a pretext as the love of a silly and vulgar girl.

At this Flora turned pale. "Indeed," continued the Lady Susan, "I hate the whole barbarous race of the Highlands ; they are so proud upon so very absurd grounds. There was, for instance, that General Maclauchlan, who used to pester my father the Duke about his ancient family, with a name far longer than their rent-roll, and yet not so much as a baronet or even a knight of the race. It was the great Lauchlan Maclauchlan, of Castle Lauchlan and Strath Lauchlan, chief of the Clan Lauchlan, whose most re-

mote ancestor had been hundred and twentieth cousin to one of the old and starving kings of Scotland, and whose mother had descended in a direct line from the kings of Denmark—or from somebody else. If the General could have been believed, the Duke himself was nothing to this savage with the long name, who, if his kinsmen could be trusted, could, at any time, or at no time, have mustered three thousand men,—a precious mob, no doubt;—for my own part, I have no notion of such people giving themselves airs ; as really there can be no honour or honours, but what belong to the peerage.”

Unfortunately this aristocratic tirade cut double ; for while it was aimed at

Flora, it also hit the Duchess, who, as she had not been ennobled beyond the memory of woman, looked upon it as an indirect thrust at herself. She made various signals of disapprobation, and signs to stop; but her daughter, who was encouraged by the tittering of her two sisters, heeded not much those indications of maternal displeasure. "Yes," continued she, "I am for old families, noble in blood, though I would allow a baronet to pass muster by especial grace,—that is to say, provided he were handsome, a colonel in the army, an M. P., and rich." "Very much flattered by your condescension, my lady," said one who was precisely in the state to which the privilege was extended. The look of disapprobation

was becoming pretty general ; but the loquacious Lady Susan continued ; and calling across, or rather down the table to Flora, “Pray, Miss Prudentia, you who know every thing, and are to teach us all that you know, and more, what is a Highland chief like ? Does he reckon himself a Lord, or a commoner ? To me, he seems quite an ambiguous animal.”

The eyes of the company were turned upon Flora, who coloured deeply at this rude and direct appeal ; and she by whom it was made, exchanging with her sisters looks which said, “we are boring the governess in grand style,” persisted in her demand.

“Madam,” said Flora, in a tone of great firmness, but ineffable mildness,

“since you are pleased to appeal to me in my capacity of your instructress, I hope the lesson will be profitable to you.” — “Bravo!” whispered the pupil, “Prudentia is going to lecture.” “A chief,” continued Flora, “is the head of a family, or clan, more or less numerous, and the Lord of the manor or manors, more or less extensive. In the feudal times, he was an absolute Seigneur, and had the complete law in his hand, in as far as regarded the property, and even the liberties and lives of his people ; though there are few instances upon record, in which he used this power, either harshly or wantonly. At present, his consideration depends upon the antiquity and honour of his family, his own bravery in war, and integrity

in peace ; his never marrying below his rank, or in violence to his affections, for the mere love of money, or to repair the effects of irregularity, and his behaving with manliness and dignity to his superiors, and with delicacy and humanity to those whom station, or accident, has made his inferiors.”

“I don’t understand you,” said Lady Susan, though the confusion of her features belied the declaration of her tongue.

The clergyman shook his head, as much as to say that he understood it well enough ; soon took his departure, and, as far as we could learn, never again entered the house. A damp was cast on the whole circle ; a minute or two elapsed in silence, which was

broken by short coughs, hems, and clearing of voices, but these ended in nothing like a conversation, and the whole became as dull and as heartless as could well be imagined.

When coffee was announced, our heroine, who had so bravely defended the honor of her country, withdrew to her own apartment; and having ascertained that Lord Fitz Arthur had gone for a few days to one of his estates, she deputed her faithful Mary to bring a hackney coach, and the two entering it, drove straight to Portland Place.

“I was thinking,” said Mary, as they rolled along, “that they just make Duchesses o’ things that are fit for nae thing else.”

“We must judge rashly of nobody,

Mary," said Flora. "We have left them ; let us forget them."

Flora had indeed left them ; and she had left a letter for the Duchess, in which she expressed her regret that she could be of no use to the young ladies ; that she could not bear to live with those to whom her services appeared, not only unavailing, but unwelcome ; and that she was not yet reduced to so low an ebb, as to barter honour for subsistence—to receive the wages of disgrace—or to be paid for being insulted : that should the alternative come, she should prefer starvation itself to any dishonour cast upon herself, her name, or her country.

The Countess, now happy in the restored, we should perhaps rather say,

the new-born love of her husband, received her friend with open arms, and kindly tendered her the shelter of her roof, and the participation of that happiness which herself now enjoyed under it,—until such a time as returning good fortune should call her to one, which, according to law, she could call her own, as much as she could call that of the Countess her own, according to friendship. The *tete a tete* of the two friends was long and interesting, and even Mary, who had formerly expressed some doubts as to the sanctuary of Lord Fitz Arthur's house, hinted to her mistress, as she was undressing her, that “An auld friend was better than a new flatterer,”—a position which Flora was in no humour to controvert.

Next morning,—that is, next evening, at six o'clock, brought the Duchess, who, delivering her card, said, that she called for the purpose of getting an explanation.

“The Countess is within,” said the old porter, “but it is her express orders that she is not to be seen.”

“Then,” said the Duchess, in a tone somewhat humbled, “can I see Miss Flora?”

“No, my Lady Duchess,” replied the porter; “her orders are, that she will not see your Grace.”

“Her orders!” said the Duchess, colouring, and relapsing into her original style—“her orders! marry come up.” But as the Porter seemed quite unmoved by those powerful expres-

sions, she said, "Then may I request, (for I suppose I must request), that you give her this parcel, with my service?"

"I had no orders as to this, and so I shall deliver it," said the porter, bowing; but the parcel was at her Grace's mansion before herself could return; and not only the parcel, but a piece of intelligence, dolorous in the extreme,—the great Duke of Quincey had "slipped his wind," and the Lady Susan was in proper mood for taking up her lamentation in the words of the song :—

"There's nobody coming to marry me,
Nobody coming to woo."

For in addition to the unpopularity, which her arrogance produced, an eruptive complaint waged war against

the small array of her attractions, and the Cheltenham waters, taken to excess, had given her Ladyship very much the air of a little red lion, painted upon a publican's sign board.

Notwithstanding the kindness of the Countess Fitz Arthur, Flora, firm to her purpose of being as independent in circumstances, as in spirit, and fearful of again disturbing the tranquillity of her friend, resolved immediately to look out for a new situation ; and only two days had elapsed, when the clergyman, already mentioned, called upon her, to offer her one. It was with the widow of a General Officer—of that very Maclachlan, whom Lady Susan had slandered so much ; who was the bosom friend of her father, and

who—as brave and as honourable a man as ever wore a British steel—had fallen in the field of honour. Flora immediately accepted the situation, and, previously to her departure (which no entreaty on the part of her friend could prevent) she sent an answer to an invitation from Tynedale House, containing not only a refusal, but a hint, that her Grace might consider all visiting and intercourse, in that quarter, as at an end.

Mrs. Maclachlan received Flora not as a companion, which was her imagined situation, but as an adopted daughter. Her character, her name, and her country, all called for the warmest welcome. It was a Highland one, and warmer there cannot be. Besides,

there was a distant relationship between her family and that of Glenmore. She was childless, and very fond of retirement and reading, so that her house suited the bent of Flora's mind and feelings most completely. But although tranquillity ever reigned under the Highland widow's roof, it was warmed by genuine hospitality, and hallowed by glowing charity. In it, modest merit met with a kind reception, and suffering worth never pleaded at its threshold in vain ; whilst men of letters, brave old officers who had gathered laurels with her husband, and poor but virtuous relations, formed the circle of her intimates, which was now honoured by the addition of the Countess of Fitz Arthur. The General's

widow never went to parties or dined out herself. What a contrast between this and Tynedale house ! Here was every rational amusement, but no dissipation,—the greatest order and regularity, yet every comfort which life could afford ; for the widow was not only well endowed by her husband and her own family—of which she was the sole heiress, but she had come into the possession of two other properties, which had been devised to her by a brother, who had made a fortune in the East, and a cousin who had realized no small degree of wealth in the West. The old lady's table was as magnificent as it was open to the deserving ; and her establishment, though for comfort more than for show, was

complete and splendid. She had a town house in May Fair, a country one in one of the loveliest situations on the banks of the Thames ; two carriages, and a becoming establishment, all ordered so as that no privation should be suffered, and yet with such exquisite economy, that there was no extravagance or waste. Mrs. Maclachlan never lost her friends, never changed her servants, and, excepting when there was something new to be adopted in the establishment, she seldom had occasion to issue orders,—every one knew what he had to do, did it, was well rewarded, and fully content.

Over this delightful establishment, the daughter of Glenmore, as being more young and active than her adopt-

ing mother, was placed like a petty princess, reigning and respected ; for she—

“Bore her faculties so meekly,”

and her authority was so tempered by gentleness and moral rectitude, that she was the idol of every person in the house, from the last (there was no mention of *low* or *lowest* there) the last menial up to her friend and patroness, who always addressed her as “my Flora,” or “my cousin.”

In such a situation, had it not been for the unwelcome intrusion of regretful reminiscences, Flora’s had been a situation of perfect felicity ; but that plant is not of earthly growth. Sublunary pleasure, like the rose, bears the piercing thorn on the same stalk ; ease, if pro-

perly described, is but the absence of the sensation of suffering; just as quiet might, perhaps, want a name, were it not that we contrast it with worldly uneasiness, with strife, with warring passions, with feverish disappointments, and with aching regrets. The present, indeed, flung a sunshine over the past; gratefully-felt kindness administered its balm to the wounded heart; but the sable chequer had still its prevalence in the life of the Highland maid,—still doomed to sorrow for others as for herself,—to bear the miseries of blighted love, or painful anxieties and sympathies for afflicted friends.

The widow's charities were extensive, but silent, secret and well selected. The clergyman, her cousin, and her

old housekeeper, were by turns her envoys and ministers in the negotiating of good deeds,—deeds, not gazetted like the public subscriptions of private squeezers of the poor, but entered upon higher and more imperishable record. Whenever Mrs. Maclachlan was induced to swell a subscription list, the sum came “from a Lady, by an unknown hand ;” was marked with a cipher, an initial, and the amount following ; any of these were never entered by her own hand, or even that of her agent. She thus “did good by stealth,” taking care that she should never have occasion to “blush to find it fame.” But to return to our history.

One morning, as Flora was preparing to enclose money in a letter, to be sent

as a quarterly allowance for the widow of a poor subaltern, who had fallen by the side of the General, a female servant told her, that she had been witness to a most afflicting scene of distress, which she was sure her good lady, if she knew of it, would relieve. The young woman added, that it wrung her heart to see a beautiful and youthful female, without a friend or relation, and quite “strange” (as she termed it,) in London, suffering great bodily pain, and often entirely out of her senses,—and a prey to some grief which she would not disclose, and apparently near the period of becoming a mother. The young lady, she continued, lived in the house of her own mother, a poor but industrious laundress, in one of the ob-

scure streets of Westminster. During the time she had been there, she had subsisted herself by the sale of a few valuables, and had now come to her wearing apparel, which indeed was almost gone,—not through any extravagance or impropriety of conduct, for she kept her room, was visited by no one, and denied herself almost the bare necessities of life. Her dress, what remained of it, was that of a lady, and so were her manners, but she did nothing but “read and weep, and weep and read, and read and weep again.”

An account of a fellow-creature in so much misery as that shaded forth in the simple story of the housemaid, made a very strong impression upon the daughter of Glenmore, who had

herself waded so deep in the waters of misery. She knew that the story must be accurate, for in the house of Mrs. Maclachlan, not even an equivocation was known ; and therefore Flora desired the girl to say nothing of it to her mistress, in the mean time, for that she herself would make the requisite inquiries, and take the requisite steps.

“ O, let it be soon, then, if you please, ma’am,” said the girl, curtseying with moistened eyes ; “ for in these cases, nobody knows what may happen.”

“ Trust me, there shall be no delay, and you are a good girl for telling me,” said Flora ; “ but wherefore did you not tell me sooner ?”

“ The lady desired my mother,” said the girl, “ to let nobody know that she

was there, and I heard of her misery only this morning, and did not like to tell my Lady herself, lest she should have been vexed with my mother, for not coming to inform her before."

"You are a good girl," said Flora, sealing the letter with the remittance, and desiring the girl instantly to carry it to the officer's widow.

Flora, aware that Mrs. Maclachlan would be affected, if she, as her chief almoner, told her a tale of misery unaccompanied by a tale of relief, took a ten-pound note and a bottle of wine, bade an affectionate adieu to her adopted mother, and, requesting the carriage, ordered it to drive to the spot described.

As she descended the steps, she met

the girl returning from her mission, which was but a few doors off. "Did the lady say nothing about her husband, Martha?" said she.

"Never, ma'am," said the girl: "my mother hinted at such a thing once or twice, but she turned delirious, so that he must either be dead, or have——"

"Deserted her," muttered Flora, covering her eyes with her handkerchief, and stepping into the carriage: "Drive quickly," said she to the coachman; and she was obeyed.

It is in the moments when sympathy melts over suffering humanity—when the hand of sickness presses sore upon its tortured object—or when the death-bed taper is a speaking lesson of life's

fleeting and uncertain tenure, and proves that the diadem cannot command health, or a sceptre parry the stroke of dissolution,—it is then that the equality and brotherhood of men is indisputably established—that the conqueror's sword, and the humblest implement of husbandry, fall alike from the impotent hand—that the palace and the lowly shed cover alike the last remains and emblems of mortality. Man clings to man in affliction and in danger; the prey of anguish, he looks for relief to the nearest fellow-creature without scruple or discrimination, and forgets the faded dream of pride, and the obliterated characteristics of precedence. It is thus with the most high and the most haughty. No wonder,

then, that the tender-hearted daughter of Glenmore—herself the child of suffering and of subjection, should have shared a common sorrow with Martha—should have regarded her as a sister, and answered to the streaming eye of the good girl, by an eye and a heart equally affected. She got into the carriage depressed by melancholy, though not without some encouragement by the hope of lightening the darkness of despair to one who had been described as standing alone at the bottom of the steps of woe; but who might soon hail the ministry of mercy, destined by a higher power, but entrusted to the visible agency of a mortal hand.

She drove to Palace Yard, told the coachman to wait while she surveyed the

Abbey, and, concealing the bottle of wine, walked through that mansion of the stately dead, (if there be stateliness in death,) to the house of mourning. Here she stopped for a moment to collect her distracted and agitated spirits, to collect herself as to the importance of her duty, and to guard against giving way to any symptoms of weakness, which might aggravate the pangs of prostrate wretchedness. It was her wish to uplift the fallen, to support the sister bruised by misfortune, to cheer the drooping, and encourage the desponding heart.

She was now at the door of the sad dwelling;—she paused—a chill seized her frame—cold drops bedewed her forehead—her respiration was slow,

heavy, and interrupted. Should she shun the haunt of misery? No: Dreaded she the infection of disease? No: Did she repent of her painful task, and resolve merely to leave a donation for the unknown sufferer? No: She was prepared for a dismal interview—for a trial of fortitude—for a powerful exertion of mind—such as human weakness must endure when forced to assume the attitude of an adviser, and an assurer of consolation; when subdued by, and blended in, those sensibilities which confound the comforter with the (till then) inconsolable, in such a manner, that steadfastness wavers, and silence supersedes intended good counsel. Thrice she stood motionless before the dwelling—thrice she raised her hand to tap

at the knockerless door ; and thrice she mechanically drew it back. She looked at her watch—looked at the atmosphere—looked wistfully around her at she knew not what. Was this absence, or was it deliberation ? It was neither. It was the dread of learning history more woeful than her own tender heart had felt, or her own warm imagination pictured,—it was the fear of compassionating too much, and assisting too little.

At length, and the space though painful was brief, she bounded up the two steps with rapidity, tapped softly at the door, requested to speak with the mother of Martha, and communicated to her her wish to be the bearer of consolation and relief to the unfor-

fortunate lady, in every shape within the possible compass of her means. The good woman of the house told her, that unless they hit upon some scheme or other for gaining admittance, they would not be able to see her melancholy inmate, who had repeatedly given orders, that none but the landlady should be allowed to enter her room, or even to get a glimpse of her ; and that Martha had obtained the latter by slipping upstairs unknown to her mother, and peeping by the side of the door, which the latter, in her haste to do her kind offices to the sufferer, had forgotten to close. The good woman added, that her lodger often forbade the shutters to be opened, saying, that

“ she was wretched, miserable, and unworthy of enjoying the light.”

“ What great crime can she have committed ?” said Flora, “ that she should thus shun the largest and freest of Heaven’s bounties ? Martha told me, that in her manners she is retired and orderly, and in her appearance she is a lady.”

“ So she is a lady, madam,” replied the woman, “ and I would work my old fingers to the bones, if it would do her any good ; she can have done nothing amiss, and yet she will not be comforted. She reads and raves, and raves and reads, till I am sure she is out of her senses, and yet she gives her command of being left alone so firmly,

though mildly, that I dare not, for the heart of me, break it.”

“ Say that I am a sick-nurse, a near relation of your own,” said Flora, “ and that I will not ask even her name ;” and pulling off the showy parts of her own clothes, she said, “ do you lend me a garb suitable to my office.”

The landlady borrowed of a lodger an old grey cloak, in which Flora was instantly wrapped and hooded, and, bending her figure, to hide its elasticity and symmetry, she tapped lightly at the door, and entered it without waiting for a command from within.

The unfortunate had been on her knees—the last whisper of a prayer to her God had been disturbed by the

noise of the opening door—she started up—her eyes glared wildly—her long hair hung carelessly over shoulders graceful in their form, but now almost bereft of apparel—she staggered forward, as if to repel the intrusion—“ I am the nurse, come to be kind to you,” said Flora, in her most winning accents. The poor sufferer stood rivetted at the words, as if spell-bound ; her lips were opened, but they performed not their office ; she appeared more like a fine production of the Grecian chisel, than an animated figure—more like a master-piece of Roman inspiration starting from the canvass, with the true *spiranti colori*—the portraiture of an expiring saint,—than the reality of a frail, lost, and deserted wo-

man. Flora approached ; her eyes in their turn grew dim—the light danced—the small maculæ of the mind's disorder floated before her doubting sight—she let fall her cloak—the living statue started—gave a shriek of the most bitter agony, and dashed itself upon the floor—it was Isabella !

CHAP. IX.

Until the heart be wholly black and worthless,
We are not wholly lost ; the power which strikes,
Comes with a healing balm : he who does plant
The thorn, prepares the kindly hand to pluck it.

OLD PLAY.

THE shriek, and the fall, filled the good woman of the house with terror, and she hurried toward the apartment of her unfortunate lodger, who, in the moment, she concluded, had rendered up the last remain of that life which appeared to hang so heavy upon her. Entering, she was as much surprised to find the two females locked in each other's arms, and drowned in a flood of tears. Flora, exerting more than

usual strength, had lifted up her fallen kinswoman, and carried her to a little couch, where she held her fast in her arms ; and while the unhappy Isabella buried her face in the bosom of her cousin, the tears of the latter rained upon her head, like the dew of heaven, for the recovery of a withering flower. Catching a glance of the landlady, Flora motioned her to withdraw, which she instantly did ; and Flora set about every means by which she could heal the lacerated heart of her cousin.

Poor Isabella, in the mean time, knew no one,—there was no world for her. To say that the daughter of Glenmore spoke wisdom and comfort, would be to say little indeed ; she tried, by fondness and words of love, to win

her from the depth of her anguish—to wile her to look more kindly on herself for Flora's sake,—called her her countrywoman, her kinswoman, her friend, her sister,—encouraged her by every expression which softness and sincerity could use,—assured her that poverty would be no longer her lot, for that the ample allowance made to herself by the generous widow of the gallant Maclachlan would be more than enough for them both,—promised to sweeten her solitude by long and daily visits—to alleviate her trouble and her sickness, by all that care, kindness, and sympathy could do;—and finally, soothed her mind, and directed her doubting eye upward, by such holy comfort as is too sublime for these light

pages, but which the reader, who has borne or who loves the cross, can well supply.

The visit was one of great length ; for Flora did not quit her cousin until she had obtained a promise, that she would be more calm, more resigned, would not reject the consolatory services of one who was anxious to be more than a friend,—nor until the self-accusing victim of another's perfidious cruelty had disburthened her oppressed bosom, by detailing the circumstances under which her ruin had been effected. Over these, however, we draw a veil ; as we would not that our pages should cause a blush to the purest cheek—a throb of distress : No page, though written upon the shroud of his

victim, in the blood which he had shed, could haply send reproof to the heart of him, by whose villainy the last and master-work of creating power had thus been laid in ruins. Suffice it to say, that Lord Gerald, violating oath and honour, verbal promise and written obligation, deserted in three weeks her whom he had deluded from innocence and happiness, to make her wretched for life. The villain fled, leaving with her a sum of money, which she instantly returned to his banker, disdaining, though she had been the victim of villainy, to receive the execrable wages of (to her, poor girl!) unintentional transgression.

Here we would bid the destroyer of innocence—the serpent, who, under the

flowers of the best and most holy affections, stings the bosom with a wound for which there is no balm—pause and reflect. Wherefore is it, we would ask him, that thou dost thus lay the loveliest of God's works level with the earth, and gather unto thy bosom a seed of infernal fire, which shall one day blaze forth in the blue and unquenchable flames of hell—of that inward hell of the awakened and retributive conscience, to which the very depth of external damnation, is as the joys of heaven?

But let us—

——— “leave *them* to heaven,
And to the thorns that lodge in *their* own breasts,
To prick and sting *them* ;”

and revert to the daughter of Glenmore,

who, after sharing her purse with her broken-hearted cousin, had another difficulty to surmount. It was now so late, that dinner had been waiting half an hour, and, in a house of so much regularity, that short time was enough to make Mrs. Maclachlan quite uneasy for the return of her "dear child"—the name by which she generally designated Flora. It was too late to dress for dinner, and Flora was puzzled what excuse to make: to depart from the truth was painful to her; and it was to the full as painful to reveal to the kind mother, who had adopted her, the disgrace and ruin, however they might have been brought about, of a near relation; to reveal them, too, without preface and without preparation. The

first resolution was not to make known the circumstance at all, but to forego, in her own person, every article of dress and of expense, so that she might supply liberally the wants of poor Isabella; but, ere this resolution was formed, she was, without knowing it, in the dining parlour of her patroness, who stood alone and ready to question her.

“What has happened you, my dear? and where have you been?” said Mrs. Maclachlan.

Flora hesitated, blushed, looked confused and bewildered. She hesitated to tell the truth, and she trembled to tell a falsehood.

The good old lady was, on her part, alarmed at this intensity of feeling, and

that made her press for an answer with the greater solicitude. "Had Flora herself met with some accident? had the servant mistaken the way? had the horses become restive, and run off? or had the carriage broken down?"

Flora shook her head as a negative to all of these questions. She sent a look of anxious forgiveness toward the good old lady, but without uttering a single syllable. That look and that silence served only to increase the agitation and the desire of a full disclosure. "Well, my dear," said Mrs. Maclachlan, "I shall never permit you to go out alone again."

The face and neck of Flora became as crimson, and a flood of tears fell on her bosom. The look which she gave

her benefactress was as that of an angel of heaven, when he pleads, not for himself, but for an erring and repentant child of the dust. The old lady could bear it no longer, she caught Flora by both arms—"What *is* the matter? What has kept you?" said she.

"Many things," replied Flora, crying aloud,—the words having afforded her some relief.

"Well, I will not press you," said Mrs. Maclachlan; "but the many things must be serious and secret indeed, if, all considered, you cannot tell them to me.

Flora dropped on her knees,—“O madam! you are my best friend—my only friend now—I would not offend you—I am incapable of doing any thing

to disgrace you—they are not things of my own—but I cannot tell you them—I cannot indeed, indeed ; and, oh ! do not press me. I will be your servant—I will be your slave—I will, no I will not, leave you, but bid me not tell you where I have been, and whom I have seen ; and, oh ! if you believe that there is, in the daughter of your kinsman, one spark of the humanity of his nature, or the honourable feeling of his race, do not, oh ! do not, insist upon my telling you where I have been to-day, or enjoin me from returning there again !”

“ I ask you, my daughter, for I must exercise a mother’s authority over you,” said Mrs. Maclachlan, “ whether it is any affair of the heart ? (Flora

started.) Any affair of love, I mean ; for if it be that, however honourable, pardon me, but I must know all about it."

" *My* love is in the grave of your kinsman Strathantin ; and with him and for him it is buried for ever," said Flora, clasping the kness of her benefactress, but soon relinquishing her hold, and falling senseless at her feet.

Mrs. Maclachlan, previously to her catechising Flora, had taken the precaution to bolt the door, and it was well that she did, for a scene like this was not for the sight of a household, even so well regulated as hers. She saw, however, from the terrible hold which the mention of Strathantin's name had taken upon Flora, that there

could be no affair of love in the case. She saw that Flora has sustained no personal injury: she had found her faithful, candid and honourable, in every tittle, up to this moment, and therefore she exchanged her interrogatories for the most soothing kindness, nor was that kindness long in producing the desired effect, for the hearts of both were such, that wickedness apart, (and here there could be no wickedness,) they could feel no estrangement.

Notwithstanding, Mrs. Maclachlan was not altogether satisfied, for she could have no conception of the real ground of Flora's hesitation, and therefore could see no reason for the concealment of any occurrence, whatever might be its nature or effects. She

could not help, therefore, regarding Flora with a little circumspection during the whole evening ; and the latter retiring early, sat down on her bed, weeping bitterly, and feeling as if she despised herself, but prepared to endure any slight or any suspicion, as she was suffering for another and not for herself—and that she was, in fact, dividing with her ill-fated cousin the shame of her misfortunes. Thus has evil, however slight, its punishment somehow or other in its train ; and the false shame which had induced Flora to the brink of an equivocation with her kind benefactress, cost her a night of anguish and remorse.

The benevolent widow had revolved the matter again and again in her own

mind ; and the more she considered it, the more she felt disposed to acquit her adopted daughter ; she therefore met her at breakfast next morning with a smile, and kissing her cheek, said—

“ I was cross to you yesterday, my darling, and I am sorry for it.”

“ And I was a bad girl,” replied Flora, with a tear of gratitude in her eye, and an accusing blush diffused over her features. “ Indeed I was a bad girl, for telling you an untruth ; or even concealing the truth from you ; but I met with a person in distress. I had little to give, but, being by honour bound to secrecy, I could not reveal even the circumstance to my benefactress, and I know that she would despise me if I did.”

“ I am perfectly satisfied, my dear daughter,” said Mrs. Maclachlan ; “ you know that my mite is always at the service of the distressed, and without asking a single question, it shall always be at the service of this unhappy unknown, whenever my good child pleases to command it.” By this, perfect good understanding was restored, and the matter ended.

Flora continued her daily visits to her cousin, but preferred going on foot, as the length of time requisite for a walk suited her purpose better ; and as her kind benefactress generally went upon such occasions to take her airing in the carriage. She, however, never suffered Flora to go out alone ; but that she might be protected in proper

military style, detached, as her body guard, Pat Lanigan, an Irish footman, who was the oldest servant in the house, and had been at one time an orderly Corporal in the General's own regiment. He was not a character out of whom Sterne himself could have made a Corporal Trim, but in his day he had been a trim Corporal, and even now he was too good a soldier for betraying the pass word or countersign of his immediate commander. Flora was, indeed, idolized by the whole servants, and therefore it was no trouble for Pat to keep his tongue "aisey," or to stop at a public-house, taking a little drop at the top of his glass for two hours ; and then, after the admonition of a single knock at the door

of the laundress, to stand in sight, waiting the appearance of Flora. Nor did he hesitate in declaring, upon his return, that “both his feet were worn off his legs by the length of the march.”

In this manner time rolled on, and a crisis was at hand, which menaced the life of the unhappy Isabella, and cost her kind, benevolent, and attentive cousin, the greatest apprehensions. The best medical aid was procured, and the danger was overcome ; and, when Isabella so far recovered as to be able to regard those about her, the face of Flora was the first that she perceived at her bed-side,—Flora’s was the hand that wiped the cold dew from the brow of the mother,—and Flora’s the breast

upon which was first pillowed the little being, guiltless of his parent's crime. The medical attendants were skilful and sedulous ; but they could not

“ Minister to a mind diseased.”

The heart of their patient was wounded to its core ; it seemed past hope, past cure, and panted for release. To fly from every accusing object—to fly from the world . was her wish, but whither could she fly from herself ? Religion is the asylum of the wounded spirit ; her religion holds out the convent as an escape from misery, and a field for the cultivation of repentance and celestial hope. She had long determined that such, if she survived, should be her asylum. She did survive, and ere long thought of its walls.

But let us leave her to her solitude and her repentance, and take up the history of our heroine, at the point at which it was dropped.

Flora had expended the whole of her allowance, and drawn upon the bounty of Mrs. Maclachlan, as far as propriety allowed, in support of the poor suffering Isabella; and still that wretched sufferer stood in need of much aid. The means of obtaining this were in Flora's power,—she had her set of pearls,—they were dear to her indeed, but not so dear as the life of her cousin; and so she resolved to raise what money she could by the sale of them. Selecting a time when Pat Lanigan was carrying redoubts and storming fortresses, for the edification

of his gaping hearers at the ale-house, she ran with trembling steps to the shop of a neighbouring jeweller, — where every look seemed an insult or degradation. Nor was this all ; for a tall man, with huge mustachios, closely wrapped in a foreign military cloak, stood gazing at her through the window, but in such a way that she could not recognize, or even discern, his features. As she came out, he, still more concealing his face, approached her, and muttered in her ear the word “perfidious !” He followed her, but she ran precipitately from him, and when she arrived at the house of affliction, she sank breathless on her cousin’s couch. Upon recovering, she communicated the circumstance, but neither

could at all account for it. Upon Pat's knocking at the door, as the signal for her departure, she again perceived the tall, incomprehensible, but imposing figure; but, perceiving that she was guarded by the footman, he, in turn, retired, though he seemed to be taking by-ways in order to watch her steps.

She now began to apprehend that Lord Gerald must have hired some foreigner to do her a mischief. The one who had dogged her seemed, indeed, both from his bearing and his attire, to be something of a high-cast; but the fatal experience of others had taught her, that no rank is without those who can commit evil deeds. She doubted and dreaded, but no tremor—no sinking of spirits, could keep her

from visiting the couch of sickness, or make her desert the deserted of all but her. At home, all was ease and comfort ; nothing could be more maternal than the good widow ; but the afflictions of Isabella tore the very heart-strings of her feeling cousin. She was under the necessity of relating all that had passed at Glenmore Castle, since that miserable cousin had left it ; and this was to both an opening of the flood-gates of unspeakable woe. The pale penitent accused herself as the proximate cause of the Chief's death. In the phrenzy of self-condemnation, she tore her hair and gave herself up to the bitterness of misery, and the day of this recital was, to both cousins, a day of sorrow and regret not to be

described;—the remorse of the one and the regret of the other, ate, for the time, into the soul, like a cancer, which no surgery could eradicate; and the traces of hours of grief like these, so remained upon Flora's countenance after her return home, that they gave her kind patroness serious uneasiness—uneasiness, however, which she had too much delicacy for seeking to remove by unauthorised or unwelcome inquiries.

Meantime a packet arrived from the Highlands, and Castlecreaghy, after wafting the prayers of the clan to the fair image and only remaining scion of the great stem of Glenmore, gave her to understand that her kinsman's anger had never slept on Isabella's fall,—

that the eye of his mind, like a keen bird of prey, had watched the perfidious Lord—that it had followed from sunny Italy to the mountains of the Tyrol, whither the viper had retreated as well to recruit his ruined health, (ruined in no common courses) as to abstract himself from dangers which hung around him on every hand; for not only was he disturbed by the fearful admonitions of the worm within, but was refreshed from time to time by a repetition of the challenge from this kinsman of Glenmore and Isabella, to hold himself in readiness for giving that satisfaction by his blood, which he had not honour or manliness enough to render in a more legal and unexceptionable form. Even the old eagle

of the rock was prepared to follow him to the limits of the earth, and had always some Highland watch upon him unperceived, yet not to be evaded. In his present state, however, the seducer was below vengeance. His condition was a shame to nobility, a mockery of man. Deserted by his mercenary female companion, left to himself by his disgusted domestics, surrounded by a host of foreigners, feared, plundered and despised, he hired slaves to serve him, subsidized strangers to hold fellowship with him, and, for the first time in his life, panic-struck, and appalled, he was flying from his very shadow, and so confounded by fears and dreams of horror, that his tottering reason reduced him to the level of a

maniac deprived of oblivion, and to the lot of an outcast, not yet sufficiently degraded to be protected by his vileness, or overlooked from his obscurity. His body perished gradually, while his mental powers became of the lowest and most uncertain order. And was this the gallant gay Lothario? Ah! how changed! At any other season, the gentle Highland maid would have pitied such a criminal; but when she viewed the couch where blighted hope, faded honour, and lost health, lay like a prostrate wreck, desolate and irrecoverable, she could not find one sentiment of commiseration for the wretch who was the cause of such irreparable wrongs. What had the hapless and helpless Isabella

lost?—rather what had she not lost? Her place in life—her situation among the daughters of men—her peace of mind—far fame and self-endurance; for she was a reproach to her own reflected image, an intruder, a burden on herself,—home, kindred, and country had ceased to be for her—the fairest gifts of nature—loveliness and artless gaiety, seemed to stand in evidence against her; she was razed from the page of reputation, and registered in the book of death: hers was truly a severe lesson to treacherous vanity, and to frail woman trusting to a flatterer's tongue, or confiding in any guard except that of moral vigilance and the armour of religion.

Flora's attentions were tender and

sisterly, but they could not win the fair penitent from her resolution of seeking shelter in a convent; and the sorrows of that penitent cast such a gloom over the days of her friend, that she could scarcely be prevailed on to join in any scene of mirth. Her worthy benefactress, perceiving this gloom upon her spirits, and imagining that it arose from that deep affliction for the loss of Strathantin, the bare mentioning of which had thrown her into so great agitation, was determined to rouse her from her languor and distaste for society; and though she approved of Flora's declaration as an evidence both of the strength of her feelings and the purity of her heart, she was resolved that so much value should not be ship-

wrecked, and that it should not be said that on this account, “ melancholy marked her for its own.”

But the weight of Flora’s sufferings was heavy, and her griefs were numerous: the lover to whom she had been betrothed, snatched from the embrace of hope and affection in the flower of youth,—a parent whom she almost adored, had been brought to an untimely grave, and the companion of her childhood and spring of life was dishonoured, ruined, banished from society, and above all, about to quit her for ever. Add to these, the case of a poor infant, whom she had adopted and undertaken to provide for. These were weighty solitudes for a young mind—sad drawbacks on a feeble fe-

male's exertions and peace ; yet did she steadily persevere in the offices of charity and romantic friendship, without ever murmuring a complaint. Her benefactress, although in the winter of life, had courage enough to depart from the ordinary plan and gravity of her mode of living, resolving to leave no measure untried which might tend to restore Flora once more to the world, to dissipate her serious turn and mournful meekness, and, if possible, to bring back those smiles which had never decked a fairer face. For this purpose she issued cards of invitation for two succeeding brilliant evening parties ; and when invited to Lady Golbourn's *soirée musicale*, she accepted the invitation, and ordered

for her “ dear girl,” as she called her, a splendid dress for that occasion. She also bought a couple of horses, and insisted upon Flora’s riding out daily for the benefit of her spirits ; but in these rides one of the horses was generally for a long time relieved of its burden, in order that Flora might visit the house of sorrow and repentance.

CHAP X.

“ Whence, and what art thou ? ”—MILTON.

LADY Golbourn's party was distant only a few hours, and Flora knew not what on earth she was to do to conceal the loss of her pearls. She looked dismally out of spirits, which her kind patroness perceiving, thought that she might have some little wants to supply, which delicacy prevented from mentioning; and so she slipped a twenty pound note into her reticule, begging of her, for her sake, to supply herself

with any little trifle of which she might stand in need. Never was any thing so fortunate, thought Flora to herself, as she, blushing, kissed the generous hand of Mrs. Maclachlan, and then hurried away to the jeweller's shop, in the full determination of re-purchasing her favourite ornaments. How blank, then, was her look, when the shopman said that it was in vain—that she had sold and not pledged them to him; and so, as he had no inducement to to keep them, he had parted with them, (he took care not to say at what price,) to a tall and handsome man, of rather a suspicious appearance, who had on a horse cloak, and wore a huge pair of mustachios. The purchaser had asked him whether these trinkets had not been

sold to him by a lady, and was particular to ascertain where the lady lived. He had stood in the shop till one of the bracelets was lengthened by a bit of pure gold chain and clasp ; he then put that one upon his own left arm, and kissing it and the others, slipped them into his pocket and walked out. “ I suppose,” added he, “ that that same gentleman that has purchased the pearls is a Russian prince, for he had a great outlandish look of nobility about him, and they say that those folks kiss their beads when they say their prayers—I mean, ma’am, when they *do* say them. I can offer you something quite as handsome, for less money.” Flora left the shop confounded, and musing how she could face her best friend, and

what could be the meaning of this strange purchase and unaccountable affection for her set of pearls. She did not forget her visit to her cousin, but it was more brief than usual, and she returned to May Fair, vexed and mortified. Her first resolution was not to go to the party ; but knowing that that would vex Mrs. Maclachlan, who had been at so much trouble and so much expence on her account, she resolved to throw herself upon her indulgence.

She was again obliged to confess, that she had succoured a distressed object, and again she persisted in preserving inviolable secrecy as to the name, but she promised to be less generous in future.

“It is not your generosity, my dear girl, that I find fault with,” said Mrs. Maclachlan, “for this time I must tell you that I find fault with the act, though none certainly with the motive. It is not your generosity, but your parting with that, which, out of regard for those who are no more, it was your duty to keep, and I will add your want of implicit confidence in me.”

Flora burst into tears.

“Do not cry, my child,” said Mrs. Maclachlan, “I am not angry. I approve your feeling, and would only wish to direct it, so that it might be exercised with more complete and ample success. To part with your valuables for the relief of strangers, is but a folly at the best, though, in your

case, an amiable folly. You throw away the things at half price, and you leave yourself at the mercy of swindlers and sharpers. I do not wish to pry into the secrets of your charity; but let it be always paid in that which you can best spare, for to be truly charitable, we must be frugal in our charities. I will double your allowance of money if you require it, or you may have the specific sums for your unknown sufferers immediately from my hand; but I shall be very angry with you, if you again sell, even for charity, any thing which is either inherited, or given to you: and so there is an end of my lecture. Be a good girl in future. I shall send for a set of pearls twice as handsome as those which you have

parted with. I shall buy them of Love, the jeweller, and that will put you in mind to keep them for love of me. The twenty pounds you may, if you choose, give to the invisible object of your beneficence ; but I am determined, that this evening you shall surpass the daughters of the Duchess in elegance, and they shall go home sighing with envy.”

“ I hope not, my dear mother,” said the daughter of Glenmore ; “ I should not like to be envied, for envy is closely allied to hatred, and I could not bear to be hated of any one.”

Notwithstanding the assurance of reconciliation with Mrs. Maclachlan, and the promise of being very splendid at the party, which, just for the sake of

her kind guardian, Flora could not help being a little pleased at, still her mind was constantly reverting to the mystery of the tall incognito, that mysterious figure which, so deeply disguised and muffled up, dogged herself like her shadow, and which had so eagerly possessed itself of her pearls. She was at a loss what to think of it. It was a subject she could not reveal, and yet it was one of those which a female heart finds the greatest difficulty in hiding. As the figure itself was dark, she dreaded that so also was its purpose; and though the jeweller had assured her that the kiss bestowed upon her trinkets was fond and devotional, she feared that, like the kiss of Judas, it might be the symbol of trea-

chery. Possibly she might meet that very figure in the crowd at Lady Gollbourn's; and yet why should she meet him there? Why should she think of him? Why should she waste a moment upon any man,—now that her parent and her betrothed were numbered with the dead, and she had no more hearts to bestow?

While she was occupied in those fragments of reverie, Love and the jewels were announced—rather a singular association; but even that forced her to think again of the tall figure in the cloak; and while she herself was trying on the new bracelets, she could not banish from her mind the idea that he was wearing the old ones. The new were more splendid certainly, but the

old had the recollection of other days about them—she had worn them when she was the flower of the Castle of Glenmore, the darling hope of a fond father.

Urged on by Mrs. Maclachlan, she dressed with all the taste and care in her power, and was complimented upon her toilet labours by Mary, who told her that she looked like a Queen.

“ A Queen without retinue, or subjects, and without——” The other word she could not supply.

“ Indeed, no, my lady,” said Mary ; “ you are Queen of a’ the hearts o’ Glenmore ; and here ye are the Queen o’ your ain Mary, and may be of some body else, if ye could find them out.”

The mantled cavalier himself could not have been a better flatterer, nor could he have touched a more puzzling chord of the soul. His image came again. It was like the implacable ghost of the murdered—it would not depart, and it would not be still ; turn where Flora would, it floated in the eye of her imagination, the huge cloak still curtaining its mysterious face, so that she might neither tell whence nor what it was. The mysterious word “ perfidious,” too, again and again rung in her ear : what could it mean ? She had been perfidious to no one. The spectre cavalier must therefore have made a mistake,—must have taken her for another. There was a counter-charm in the thought,

and, by its application, the dogging figure was chased from her memory.

“The carriage waits ; Mrs. Mac-lachlan is rather impatient,” said a valet, tapping at the door of Flora’s apartment. Flora hurried out at this notice, and, in a few minutes, the dazzling lights from the mansion informed them, that they had arrived at Lady Golbourn’s.

If the former party was splendid, this one outshone it so much as to appear like the mid-day sun, while the other resembled the moon labouring under an eclipse ; and yet her ladyship had never had more than fifteen hundred pounds a year, which was now reduced to half that sum, and she was

besides on the wrong side of every tradesman's books at the court end of the town. *N'importe*, she must vie with the great. The decorations of her apartments were at once tasteful and expensive; she herself was a walking constellation of brilliants, and her supper-table groaned under plate of the most massy substance and the most exquisite workmanship. The attendance of one of Mr. Love's men in an anti-room, along with the shopman of another opulent silversmith, proved that all this grandeur was but ephemeral—that, like other riches and other splendour, it was but for its hour; still, during that hour, it had not the less effect.

The Duchess was astounded on entering the room, and looked like a huge full-length picture of

“Envy that sickens at another’s good.”

Her daughters, too, in pride and fretfulness, tossed up their heads, like those horses at Astley’s, which are best trained in the manege; but, on meeting with Lady Golbourn, they were loud in their admiration of every thing, and continually telling her that she had given them a most charming *soirée*.

The programme of the fête was—an amateur concert, fire-works in the garden, a room thrown open for waltzes, a costly supper, and glee-singing after by a professsional party. Her Grace of Tynedale complained that there was

no card-table, adding (good naturedly, of course) that she supposed her ladyship had no money ; and that they might expect to see her in the bench in a few months ; for she must be mad, upon her small means, thus to ape the highest circles. She concluded by saying to her daughters, loud enough to be heard, “ take care, my loves, who you dance with, for I have detected a money-lender, an attorney and the family-surgeon, who are, doubtless, all unpaid, and allowed to see this show, as a *bonus* in addition to the accumulating interest on their accounts.”

At this moment, the old clergyman joined the General’s widow and her fair charge ; he made a slight remark of regret at the uncalled-for extrava-

gance of the entertainment, but praised the goodness of the giver's heart. "It really disgusts me," said he, "to hear the Duchess making her ill-natured remarks. Had her uncle been here, he would have been a fine contrast to his affected nieces, who will scarcely deign to speak to a commoner, however rich or respectable; but," continued the clergyman, whose age and habits gave him a little license for garrulity, "to return to the said uncle, the distiller. He had got a taste, or if you like it better, madam, a fondness for theatricals, and spouting at clubs and society dinners. He used to sing a good song, the consequence of which was, that he neglected his business,

took to hard drinking, and failed. For my own part, I have never liked, and, at any rate, would never trust, a tradesman, who is a pillar of clubs or debating societies ; a politician—no matter on what side—a private actor,—or a singer. I should consider my money unsafe in such hands, and his own is really not much better. The poor uncle of the Duchess was not, however, without his penance, and I shall never forget the appearance he made, when, after he had taken to drinking ardent spirits, he addressed his brandy bottle with—

‘ Art thou a spirit of *health*, or goblin damned ?’

But here comes the Duchess, of whom, though we may not just ask the same

question, we may be permitted to hint, that she is a notable specimen of patchwork nobility."

By this time the room allotted for the waltzers was crowded to the greatest excess, and a great many fair ones were anxious to have their turn of floating round, light and graceful, upon the arm of a favourite cavalier. The two graces, Susan and Mary, were without partners, when three sisters, daughters of a very respectable gentleman holding an office under government, and very handsome, came by, linked on the arms of a lieutenant of the Navy, and two Cantabs preparing for holy orders.

"Dear me, mamma!" said Mary, "the servants have let in the mob."

“How it exhales the odour of ox-horn and cow-hide,” replied the lieutenant. “Yes,” said one of the scholars, “‘Worth makes’—you know the rest of that line;” and, glancing toward the Duchess and her daughters with a very significant expression of irony, “‘the rest is all but leather and prunella.’”

Flora, who hung on the elderly clergyman’s arm, gave place to the gay throng, and although asked in the hearing of the above-named ladies, to dance with half a dozen of the prime beaux in the room, politely, but firmly, declined every offer. The two suitors of Lady Grace and Lady Mary appeared, viz. Lord Ballymahon, a sprig of the sister kingdom, bearing much flourish, but little golden fruit;

and the Baron Verlewegen, of Belgian extraction. This arrival was a great relief to Lady Grace, who taking the arm of her admirer, with an air of triumph, pushed past a score of untitled ladies and gentlemen, and rushed into the vortex of the waltzers. The Peer, however, was less complaisant. He said it was bad taste to dance in so large a set; that it was downright suffocation; besides, to tell the truth, he was almost hazy from drinking oceans of Madeira and rosy Champagne with a certain nabob, that day. His gentle fair one bit her lips, but as she looked up to a future husband, she was contented with remaining pendent on his arm, and calling him Lord B. every moment. Lady Mary was still proud-

er of her swain; for he had half a dozen of decorations, and was acknowledged to be one of the best waltzers in the room. Indeed, it was a sort of contested election, in the eyes of waltz-loving beauty, between the Baron, so bedecked with orders, and Colonel Percyflower, most exquisitely perfumed, who, although not adorned like the Baron, considered himself by nature “adorned the most.” They were both considered as delightful creatures; the Baron’s mustachios carried all the widows and noon-day belles by a *coup de main*—or rather we should call it, by a *coup de barbe*, while the lady-like complexion of the lisping Colonel of the *Gardes* “did its do,” among the young and inexperienced hearts.

When he had finished the waltz, he left his partner, adjusted himself at the glass, and then turned towards the next groupe of beauties, with an air, which said, or at least signified, “there, look and languish, d—me.”

No *event* of importance occurred during the night. Flora, indeed, overheard the daughters of the Duchess, describing her, as a poor gentlewoman, who had come to be their governess; but who had been unable to teach them any thing.

“That cuts back and face,” said Lord Ballymahon, squinting at his Grace, as much as to say, that he liked the feast of the dowry better than the grace that was to accompany it; but her Ladyship was either too unlearned

or too loving, for perceiving the irony ; and so she went on to wonder at the expense of Flora's dress, adding that she was now nothing more than humble companion to an old lady without rank or title, who, as she was Highland herself, and the widow of a Highland officer, could not be rich.

“ By Jupiter !” said the Peer, “ she'd make a very elegant companion for a young gentleman.”

This remark, coming within the range of Lady Grace's understanding, displeased her a little, and at the same time had the good effect of shifting her conversation to another subject.

Although the mob had not, in Lady Mary's meaning of the term, been let in, yet there was something like mob-

bing by forward ladies, in order to procure first-rate places at the supper. The supper itself was excellent, however, and that part of the entertainment *went off* in the best possible style.

On entering the saloon in which this splendid supper was laid out, Lady Fitz Arthur caught Flora's arm, and placed her by her side during the remainder of the entertainment. The marked attention of this lively beauty to her friend, and the modest and graceful appearance of the Highland maid herself, drew much admiration; for a new bloom was given to the cheek of Flora, and a new sparkle to her eye, upon hearing from her dear Emily, that she was now perfectly happy with her husband. "My dear George Ed-

mund,” said she, “is now all that I could wish; he has quite given up play: lives very temperately; keeps tolerably good hours; and, above all, he is very kind to me. Great part of this, my dear Flora, I owe to thy good advice, which you know was—to bear patiently any little neglect, to oppose mildness to irritability, to shut my eyes to what I ought not to see, and be diligent in practising the art of pleasing in all its bearings and branches. I am an apt scholar you must see, for your teaching and my studying have, in a short time, been crowned with complete success.”

Thus chatted the two friends, or rather thus chatted the one of them, while the other listened, smiling appro-

bation. The evening rolled away, and Morpheus put in his claim for dominion at a becoming hour.

Next morning Flora's visit to her poor cousin was later than usual ; but it was not omitted. The convalescent was gaining bodily strength rapidly ; but the heart's wound was deep and incurable. There was no plucking from her memory the rooted sorrow. Her country now seemed only a witness of her disgrace, and every thing was settled for her speedy departure. The veil, she hoped, would throw a protective covering over self-condemnation ; but a darker mantle awaited the weary penitent. In proportion as the day of her quitting town approached, the heart of her feeling kinswoman sank

with despondence ; she knew that they were never more to meet ; that an impassable barrier would be placed between them ; and that terrible “ never ” contains, in its five little letters, volumes of hapless and unavailing sorrow,—it clings to the heart, and it will not, till it has lacerated every portion of that, take its final journey to the lips.

Flora, however, did all that she could to prepare for the pronouncing of that fatal word ; but as is the case with all preparations for the pronouncing of it, hers only tended to make it the more bitter, and the more dreaded ; for those very means, which were a daily increase of affection for the little innocent pre-doomed to be an orphan, made

her cling more closely to its heart-rending parent. Upon the present occasion, she had taken the infant into her arms, and was hushing it to sleep near the window, when accidentally turning her eyes toward the street, she perceived the tall and mantled stranger watching her every motion, raising his hands and wringing them as if horror-struck at the sight of her. Accident showed her a greater portion of his face than she had hitherto seen ; but memory could connect it with no old recollection. She concluded, that he must be a maniac ; and as it is known that madness, in one of its most incurable forms, often takes a violent attachment to some person erewhile unknown, she became more alarmed than

ever. She did not, however, mention the circumstance to her cousin, lest the agitation it might produce should retard her convalescence, or throw her back into sickness and danger; but she was ever and anon casting a glance toward the window, to see whether the appalling and mysterious figure had departed. But it continued to linger and hover about, until the approach of the footman to warn Flora that it was time to depart, caused it to retreat for a little space.

“And by the powers, my lady,” said Pat, after they had got into the street, lifting his hat as he spoke, “and sure and if ever your ladyship or myself had committed a murder, if I would not say that that were a ghost.

It will be always after coming near your ladyship ; and yet it has never a word to trow at a dog. I tried it with all the countersigns in the orderly book, and it will not answer to none of them, at all, at all.

“ I know nothing of it, Patrick,” said Flora, “ and I wish to know nothing of it. We have no reason to suppose that it is interested in us. Its title to the public street is as good as ours ; and as it will not speak to you, my advice to you is, that you neither speak to it, nor of it.”

“ And sure, my lady, and I’ll be as silent as a magpie,” said Pat, making his most submissive bow, and falling into the rear. The spectre, however,

met them at every turning of the street in their way home ; but Pat, better than his promise, preserved a more than magpie taciturnity ; and Flora, alarmed though she was, did not name the circumstance to any one, for fear of exposure, not so much on her own account, as on that of her wretched cousin.

Upon her return home, she was informed that two fierce-looking men, in tartan cloaks, insisted upon seeing her ; that the one of them spoke English so badly, as not to be properly understood ; and that the other, who seemed altogether a foreigner, had been, though not a mute, at least unintelligible until Pat Lanigan had conversed a little with him in some language which the latter

was supposed to have learned while abroad in the wars of the late general.

Flora, apprehensive of some treachery on the part of the muffled and mysterious stranger, hesitated to descend, and the one of the strangers as positively refused to enter even the hall, until the “leddy Flora” made her appearance. She therefore looked from the window ; caught a glimpse of the broad-banded tartan of the *Sblioh nan More* ; thought she perceived the visage of the gamekeeper, and, in a few seconds, she was at the entrance door.

The two strangers, flinging up their bonnets as high as the windows of the second floor, set up a shout, something resembling the war-whoop of the In-

dians, till the whole house rang again ; while a thousand blessings were rained upon Flora, and the whole imagery of the Gaelic language exhausted in comparing her to every object of beauty and delight, which their mountain knowledge or their mountain manners afforded.

“ I canna speak,” said the game-keeper, “ but gin your leddyship need a stout heart and a strong hand, ane wha wad gang last to the wood and first to the mire for ye, I am here to answer for the hale Clan-more, man and boy.”

Flora thanked them in their native tongue, and assured them, that the kindness of the clan should never be lost upon their, in the meantime, absent

and dependent mistress ; and that she trusted heaven, which rewarded or punished for reasons beyond the scrutiny of man, would, one day, restore her to enjoy her native heaths, and cheer her native hearths.

“ Amen, and soon, and God’s blessing,” said the two in one breath. They gave to her such presents as the glen produced ; and quite happy to find that she was living as a lady, and in the house of a Maclachlan, they retired under the command of Pat Lanigan, to take such refreshment as the length of their journey, of six-hundred miles in about two weeks, with light fare and scanty purses, required. The causes of their long journey, and sudden appearance, will come out in the sequel.

CHAP. XI.

“Go, get thee to a nunnery.”—HAMLET.

“My native land, good night.”—CHILDE HAROLD.

THE arrival of the two mountaineers was not long in being known to the whole household in May Fair. Little Mary had hoisted the tartan in less time than the ordinary tribe of lady's maids could easily comprehend, and having hoisted that, she descended the stairs with more rapidity than is customary with even that light-footed tribe. The shakings by the hand, the “good graciousees ! and are you there ?” the

uninterrupted inquiries, the questions answered by a look, and the questions so rapid as not to admit of that brief response, passed like the shadow of a cloud upon a Highland glen—like the ruffling of the wind upon a Highland lake. The little inquirer had to ask after all, and the two respondents had knowledge of all to communicate. It was begun, and begun, and begun; but no astrology could calculate the termination. Their Gaelic conference seemed the very quintessence of a dispatch, and showed as though it comprised the history of every man and every beast that had ever lived, that was living, or that was likely to live, in the wide extent of Glenmore. Nor were the very localities themselves

forgotten. The castle, the loch, the river, the cliff, the clachan—every field, every hill, every spot, and almost every bush, had its note of recollection, and its tribute of praise.

There is something exquisite in this—something which the inhabitants of thronged cities, or plains, in which the plough is ever turning up a new surface, cannot appreciate. In these places, the memorials of man are swept away in the rapid succession of his own fancied improvements; and in his cupidity for wealth, he drives his ploughshare or his team over the very graves of his immediate ancestors; and exposes, in his love of present enjoyment, the crumbling bones which thus become at once the mementos of

his own death and his own oblivion. But in the patriarchal land of the north, there is, or there was, ere avarice laid it waste, or the love of money made it a désolation—a love of everything that was, as well as of every thing that is. The same ancient stone which sheltered the sire, shelters the son; against the tree which his father planted, no man will lift up an axe; and the resting-place of the departed is sacred as long as life warms a heart which was present when they were laid in the dust. In a great city, man, dependent on his own exertions, following the bent of his own passions or appetites, and reckless of every gratification but those of himself, is disjointed from man. The tenants of the

same roof know not the names of each other, and to be parted by one paltry brick makes a separation as complete as though they dwelt at the antipodes. Not only is man disjointed from man, but age is disjointed from age. The people who inhabit a street or a square, now know nothing and care nothing about those who inhabited it immediately before, and their brief memorial will be as quickly blotted out by the persons whom chance may afterwards place in the same situation. Thus, while the great city brings the bodies of men together, it scatters their minds, breaks all the ties and links of sympathetic society, and piles up its tens and hundreds of thousands, (to all intents and purposes

of deep feeling and delightful intercourse,) like the cold, hard, unadhering and unconnected particles of a mountain of sand, which the wind of whim, or chance, or commerce, may whisk about just as the sand particles by the Red Sea are whisked about upon the wings of the deadly saniel. In the retirement of the country, and especially in that country from which our humble visitors have come, and to which our lovely heroine is looking, it is not so. There man is united to man, and age is linked with age, in the closest ties of friendship, the most delightful bonds of sympathy, the most touching reminiscences of sorrow, and the fondest anticipations of hope. If a man would eat, drink, die, and be forgotten,

let his dwelling place be in the city : if he would live, love, and be remembered, let him speed him to the glens of the mountains.

In less time than we have wasted, (will our readers call it so ?) upon these moralizings,—moralizings which we admit to be needless, both to those of the city, and those of the glen—as the former cannot feel, and the latter do not need them—the news of the Highlanders' arrival reached their ancient country-woman—the widow of “a brave among the brave.” The heart of Mrs. Maclachlan was not slow in warming to the tartan; nor was she without external memorials, which in addition to the imperishable remembrance, linked it with her every-day

thoughts. In her room were displayed and preserved, with fonder attention than any other part of her property, the full-length portrait of the General, in costume as a Highland Colonel; and beside it were hung his sash, his gorget, his dirk, his pistols, and his trusty claymore, which his faithful widow would suffer to be cleaned and kept in order by no hand but her own. We say his faithful widow, and in saying we err not, for it implied not only faithful “until death do us part,” but a duty and an attachment beyond the grave,—too fond and too proud to change name or condition; and a fixed resolution of living and dying, as the widow of the gallant Maclachlan, whose friend never saw the back of his

hand, and whose foe never saw the back of his coat.

All these combinations were not only favourable to the humble guests, to which category the messengers of Glenmore were at once admitted, but it raised them to the rank of friends. The widow sent for them to the drawing-room, to which place they went with great reluctance, and positively insisted on pulling off their shoes at the door; and Pat, who furnished them with a pair of red morocco slippers a piece, could scarcely prevent them from pulling off their stockings, lest they again should do injury to these. They were at last, however, got within side the room, and the kindness of the lady of the mansion soon relieved all

their apprehensions, and removed their embarrassments. Her Gaelic was a little rusted, if not altogether forgotten, but still, what with her remains of Gaelic, and beginnings of English, she was able to make them understand, that they should not be without a home, while in London, or money to support them comfortably back to the glen, the loch, the mountain, and the castle of their Chief.

Mrs. Maclachlan knew well the localities of Glenmore, for in her younger years, the castle had received her within its hospitable gates, and, accompanied by the sister of the late Chief, she had tripped it lightly through the surrounding scenes, and those scenes are of so bold and determined a

character, that it is but once meeting the eye, and their memorial is on the tablet of the heart for ever. This is another advantage of Highland localities—another strong characteristic in which they differ from the dull plains of the south : in these, there is absolutely nothing to remember ; in those, there is just as little to forget. The good lady, delighted alike with a reference to scenes, which brought back to her mind the dawnings of young life, and to persons and dresses that awakened to her memory the joys of young friendship, and the buddings of young love, felt more pleasure in having within her apartment those two rude and simple, but powerful and manly Highlanders, than if it had contained half

the lispng beaux and lacquered belles, who trifle their day in the circles of the court-end of the town, and then, like other gay and giddy things, become common, neglected, and forgotten.

Flora, too, although she required some space in her own apartment to sigh over the past, and to wish—she would that she could have hoped—for the future, dressed herself in the costume of her clan as speedily as possible. Her appearance in that costume, in which she had not hitherto appeared in London, heightened the power of her beauty and the general interest of her appearance. Her clansmen were quite ecstatic at her appearance; and the eye of the good lady

who had adopted her, sparkled with unwonted delight. Previous to her appearance, the conversation between Mrs. Maclachlan and the two clansmen, had been one, more of feeling than of words,—of signs and touches, than of rounded periods; but Flora became interpreter to both, and from her own perfect knowledge and exquisite taste in both languages, as well as the joy of her heart, and the animation of her manner, at acting this part between those whom she loved so dearly, gave to the conversation a colouring of fancy, and a glow of friendship, which would have put to shame the maudlin sentiment, and twaddling wit, of those persons, who, taking their themes

from waltzes and wines, believe that what they say is the very *acme* of real entertainment.

Never, indeed, was day more happily spent. There was not present one of those untuned strings which are ever found in the concert instruments of fashionable life, and there were none of those envies, jealousies, fears, or remorse, which are ever and anon jarring those strings to the destruction of all harmony of the heart. Mrs. Maclachlan was in fortune, in manners, and, need we add, in reputation, high among the highest class; Flora was high by birth, high by the endowments of nature, and the cultivations of art, and but for the durable material of her affections, and the uncorrupted faithfulness of her

heart, she might have been high in that honour of which those, who have none else, are the most proud. The two clansmen, on the other hand, were poor and illiterate ; their stations were menial ; education they had had little ; wealth, or artificial polish, they had none ; but there was a heart in each of their bosoms, and it was a Highland one. The hearts of the ladies also were Highland, and, all other considerations apart, this one circumstance would have obliterated all the distinctions of rank, riches, and artificial culture.

“The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.”

Yes, there are not only numerous links in the great chain of humanity—when untainted by vice, and unsophis-

ticated by art, which bind and endear us to each other ; but there are bends and turns in each link, which draw heart to heart, by the nicest, most minute and imperceptible attractions ; such were the sentiments which gave this welcome, without ostentation, and which made those who received it, though they accepted it as a boon, and a boon deserving of their warmest gratitude, treasure it up as a holy right. May Fair had now become the land of the heather. The purple bloom was upon the dingy and dusky street ; the dull uniformity of bricks, was shaped by all-skillful fancy into every contour of Highland hill and Highland rock ; and all was Scotland within the compass of the mind's eye.

But not even the honour conferred on those who braved the flood, or scaled the mountain, in their most frowning aspect, could make them forget the home of their fathers, and their duty to those whom they held dear. The one hastened them to acquit themselves of their self-imposed embassy, whilst the other made them measure time by the distance from the less fertile, though not less loved, soil of their nativity. In consequence of this weariness for home, the game-keeper, on the second day, delivered his credentials in due form. He had brought a large packet from Castlecreaghy, communicating the glad tidings of prosperity and activity in the glen. The sale of black cattle had

been brisk, and prices high ; a number of the clan had volunteered their services in putting the Castle and every thing about it to rights ; many hands had trained and trimmed the garden, in such fashion as a Highland garden is trained and trimmed ; and the children of sires, who blessed the name of Glenmore, had brushed up the interior of the chief's dwelling, and removed the cobwebs from its antique roofs and lofty windows. Black game was plenty, and fish abundant ; a few chosen articles of plate, which had been buried when the Castle was sacked by Mac Skinner, had been dug up and deposited in their places ; and some bonds for money lent by the head of the clan, had been found out and put

in a train of payment ; Mac Skinner himself, met upon his own arena of the law, by the most skilful solicitors and the most eloquent and powerful advocates of the Scottish metropolis, set on and paid by some unknown hand, had been kicked out of his unlawful possession, made to refund the fruits of his iniquity, and, in short, cast, with so much loss, at every stage of the proceedings, that he, himself, had space to repent in the very mansion and room into which he had wheedled the unsuspecting Glenmore. In fine, hope dawned once more upon the land, and the deputation came to pray the Lady Flora to set her foot again upon her native heather, and reign happy and honoured among her own people.

Her heart overflowed at the news ; it bounded to meet her clan ; but inflexible justice induced her to state, at once, the propriety of her waiting a little longer, till the returning prosperity should enable her to clear the property of her father of at least some of its incumbrances. This, coming from her to whom they owed and gave more than a subject's allegiance, was of course acquiesced in by the game-keeper and the fisherman ; although the former, according to his own mode of thinking, would have gladly seen every creditor of his chief upon the top of Ben Nevis ; and the latter, at the bottom of Loch-more ; and had they been there, we are not sure but the game-keeper might have mistaken them for

black game, and the fisherman for black fish ; and so the one would have made them silent on the hill, and the other have left them silent in the waters. The mandate of Flora was held sacred by her clansmen ; and though they were not altogether satisfied with it, they prepared to carry it to those by whom they had been deputed ; but ere they set out on their long journey, the kind lady, under whose roof they had been made so happy, supplied them, not only with ample funds for the journey, but with presents to the head men and matrons of the clan ; and a Gaelic exclamation of no ordinary length, and, we may add, of no ordinary height, shook the room when Mr. Love's shopman displayed his two or three dozen of elk-

horn mulls, finely mounted in chased silver, with a large and sparkling cairngorum on the top of each, and an equal number of huge silver brooches, chased and jewelled after the same fashion. Flora herself was, on this occasion, allowed to send nothing but congratulations and words of kindness, and Mrs. Maclachlan's hint to this effect, was taken up instantly, and with considerable tact, by the gamekeeper.

“Na, na, my lady Flora,” said he, “we’ll no be taking ony thing frae you but y’ersel. We will send you what you like, but the present o’ a chief is never blessed gin it binna gièn wi’ a chief’s ain hand in a chief’s ain hall.”

This logic was of course irresistible ;

and Flora, fond as she would have been to have sent remembrances to all her kindred, was forced to limit her donation to Castlecreaghy alone, and to him she was allowed to send no more than a pound of snuff. Upon little Mary there was no such restraint; and her relations, though more lowly and limited than those of Flora, had all occasion to know that she was in London.

The parting of Flora with her vassals was interesting and affecting. She recommended herself to their remembrance—sent her kind greeting to all her clan—named the individuals by whom offices of kindness should first be done at the castle, with the idea of soon returning, at which her heart was

quite elated ; and when she had shaken them heartily by the hands, and given them her hands to kiss, she hurried to her own apartment, there to give vent to the feelings of her heart.

Mary's little farewell followed as warm and fond, though not as stately, as that of her mistress. The good widow had previously taken her adieu, not the least kind, and by far the most substantial ; and the two Highlanders were descending the last step into the street, when another parting became necessary.

“ Och ! and sure you would not go without a drop of the crature,” said Pat Lanigan, “ for I am dry with sorrow to part with you, though I cried so much at leaving ould Ireland, that I

have never a tear left but what comes o' the whisky."

The behest and the beverage of Pat Lanigan were alike not to be resisted ; and so the Highlanders stepped into his apartment, and there washed the shores of both lands in a copious libation of poteen to " the memory of Glenmore ; his swate daughter ; the land o' cakes ; and last, though not least, Erin go bragh." After which, as nothing could follow but their own healths, and their own healths again, they parted, and with their parting, closed the first act of that day's drama.

Mrs. Maclachlan being indisposed, requested Flora to order the carriage, and execute some commissions, adding, " take a turn or two in the park,

my dear child, for you look pale in consequence of the excitement of this unlooked-for pleasure." Flora agreed to do so, but first resolved to take a turn towards the humble street in Westminster, in order that she might console her forlorn relative.

She found her preparing for her departure the ensuing day, with as much anxiety as though she had been flying from herself; but strong lines of melancholy marked her countenance, when she cast a fond and regretful look on that kind friend and benefactress who had been to her more than a sister. After one long and agonizing gaze, she buried her head in the bosom of her cousin, and watered that pure bosom with a flood of tears of as sin-

cere regret, and as genuine penitence, as ever fell from the eyes of lovely, loving, deluded and forsaken woman. It were vain to attempt painting their attitude or their agony ; it were impossible to tell their words. Their embrace was long—to the reader it must be silent ; but to the feelings, the voice of that silence is louder than the sound of many waters.

In Isabella, true to that honourable feeling, under cover of which she had been undone, there was yet in the poor outcast a lingering for the faithless lord. She had prepared one last and little epistle,—she had prepared it with labour, if not with skill ; it was written in blotted words and in tears. These she had been anxious to avoid,

and so she had written again and again, but every copy was more blotted and more tear-stained than its antecedent. She could make no better of it, and so she left it to be sent to the murderer of her peace, as eloquent in its blots and its tear-drops, as that of Julia to Juan is in its poetry and in its pretence. We would not publish to the common gaze that overflowing of the agonized heart—the harlot epistle is upon the town; let the public—let Lord Gerald, (for he *can* read) read that.

Every thing relative to poor Isabella's journey was now arranged. To the twenty pounds already mentioned as the widow's gift, was added all that Flora had in her own posses-

sion ; a letter of credit was procured ; and Flora, now heiress of Glenmore, gave bond for the regular quarterly payment of her cousin's pension ; and nothing now remained but the last farewell—a farewell, over which the veil must be drawn. Time, however, stays not his hour-glass for the love of the fond, though he linger most maliciously by the couch of the miserable ; and so he gave the signal, that Isabella was soon to traverse the ocean, and soon to enter those gates which would close upon her once and for ever.

END OF VOL. II.







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